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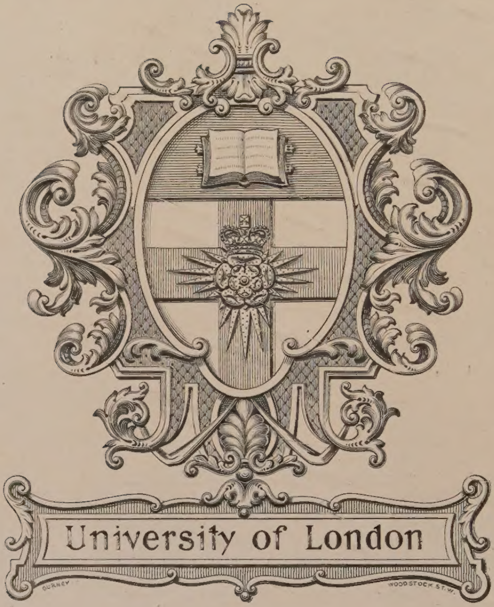

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

8 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CLXXXIV.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM WEDNESDAY, TWELFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1908, TO WEDNESDAY, TWENTY-SIXTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1908.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION.

1908.

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CHRONOLOGY OF "THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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Crown Jewels Commission (Ireland).—Appendix to the Report and Minutes of Evidence to lie upon the Table. 14

Pauperism (England and Wales) (Monthly Statements). 14

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

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Railway and Canal Traffic Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 5th May, and to be printed. [Bill 71] 53

Trust Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 72] 53

Tobacco Growing (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to printed. [Bill 73] 53

Parliamentary Elections Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 10th April, and to be printed. [Bill 74] 53

Industrial Schools Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 28th February, and to be printed. [Bill 75] 53

Municipal Corporations (Election of Aldermen) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, and to be printed. [Bill 76] 53

Irish Peerages Bill.

Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal S.) 54

"Motions made and Question—" That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Law concerning the Peerage of Ireland "—Put and agreed to Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. MacNeill, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Beaumont, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Smeaton, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, and Mr. William Redmond.

Irish Peerage Bill.

"To amend the Law concerning the Peerage of Ireland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 77.]

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and Land Values (Scotland) Bill—Allocation of Time.

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That in the Case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee Stage, and Report Stage of the Bill (including the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner: (*a*) The Committee Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day; and the Bill shall, when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the Whole House without Question put; (*b*) the Report Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) and the Committee Stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House, and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put; (*c*) if the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report Stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on a third allotted day. After this Order

comes into operation, any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first Order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall, at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m., and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to a conclusion) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee Stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses shall stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this Order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business to be brought to a conclusion are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall—(*a*) prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day being allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of (King's Recommendation of the payment of any Salaries, Compensation, and other Expenses that may be incurred in pursuance of any Act of the present session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, and of the payment of an Annual Grant for the purposes of such Act, signified)."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 64
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.*) 75
Mr. Laurence Hardy (*Kent, Ashford*) 80
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Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 95
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Mr. George Faber (York) 110
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 113
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 117

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Henry Forster*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To morrow.

Registration of Voters.

Mr. Rowlands (Kent, Dartford) 121
Mr. Higham (Yorkshire, W.R., Sowerby)... 128

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the complexity and limitations of the Laws regulating the Registration of Voters deprive large numbers of persons otherwise qualified to vote of such right, and therefore it is urgently necessary that immediate steps be taken for the amendment of these Laws."—(*Mr. Rowlands.*)

Sir William Bull (Hammersmith) 131
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) 133
Sir Henry Kimber (Wandsworth) 139
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 141

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'but such Amendment ought to be accompanied by arrangements for the better representation of all voters by a redistribution of seats.'"—(*Sir Henry Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 142
Sir F. Banbury 147
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 152

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 31 ; Noes, 129. (Division List, No. 8.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, the complexity and limitations of the Laws regulating the Registration of Voters deprive large numbers of persons otherwise qualified to vote of such right, and therefore it is urgently necessary that immediate steps be taken for the amendment of these Laws.

Daylight Saving Bill.—Order for the Second Reading read.

Mr. R. Pearce (Staffordshire, Leek) 155

And, it being Eleven o'clock the debate stood adjourned.

Adjourned at Two minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bills have been complied with.—Barry Railway [H.L.]; Highgate Hill Tramways [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway [H.L.]; London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. [H.L.]

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STANDING ORDERS have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for additional provision in the following Bill.—London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) [H.L.].
The same were ordered to lie upon the Table. 157

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill.—Petition praying that Standing Order No. 86A may be dispensed with, and that the Bill may be read a first time; read, and ordered to lie upon the Table, and Standing Order No. 86A to be considered on Monday next, in order to its being dispensed with 157

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Presented, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners ... 157

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Crown Jewels Commission (Ireland).—Appendix to the Report of the Viceregal Commission, ordered to lie upon the Table 157

Shops Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the town council of the borough of Taunton; ordered to lie upon the Table 158

Public Bills.—Return respecting; to be printed. (No. 12) 158

NEW BILL.

Small Holdings and Allotments (Scotland) Bill [H.L.].—Read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 13.) 158

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY SCHEME.

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The Under Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Portsmouth*)... ... 162
Lord Belper 165

THE HOME ESTABLISHMENT.

Earl Cawdor 166
The Earl of Portsmouth 166

House adjourned at Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.
Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 167

Margate Corporation Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 167

Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899.—The following Bills to originate in the House of Lords, viz.: Leith Burgh; North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, etc.). Report to lie upon the Table 167

PETITIONS.

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—16 Petitions for Legislation; to lie upon the Table 167

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Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—24 petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 167

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Army Estimates, 1908–9.—Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 49.] 168

Army (Ordnance Factories) Estimates, 1908–9.—Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 50.] 168

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the town council of the borough of Taunton; to lie upon the Table 168

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NEW BILLS.

Nurses (Registration) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 78] 224

Conveyancing Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 79] 224

Settled Land Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 80] 224

Pensions (Old Age) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 81] 224

Housing of Working Classes Acts Amendment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 82] ... 225

Ferries (Ireland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 83] 225

Luggage (Definition) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 84] 225

Voters (Qualification and Registration) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 28th February, and to be printed. [Bill 85] 225

Urban District Councils (Advertising) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 2nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 86] 225

Local Authorities (Admission of the Press) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 10th March, and to be printed. [Bill 87] 226

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, that the Proceedings on the Motion for the Allocation of Time with respect to the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill have precedence this day of the Business of Supply.—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and Land Values (Scotland) Bill (Allocation of Time).—Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12th February], "That in the case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee stage, and Report stage of the Bill (including

the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner: (*a*) The Committee stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day: and the Bill shall, when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the Whole House without Question put: (*b*) the Report Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) and the Committee Stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House, and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put: (*c*) if the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the third allotted day. After this Order comes into operation any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first Order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m., and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to a conclusion), put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this Order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business to be brought to a conclusion are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) Prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day being allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) Prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Mr. Forster (*Kent, Sevenoaks*) 228

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Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out all after the word 'That,' and add the words 'this House declines further to curtail its liberty of discussion until the Government have laid upon the Table of the House their general scheme for dealing with Bills involving matters of controversy.'"—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'in the case of' stand part of the Question."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.*) 235
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 239
Mr. Barnes (*Glasgow, Blackfriars*) 245
Mr. Munro Ferguson (*Leith Burghs*) 247
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Mr. Lambton (*Durham, S.E.*) 250
Sir J. Jardine (*Roxburghshire*) 253
Sir Francis Powell (*Wigan*) 254
Sir Gilbert Parker (*Gravesend*) 257
Sir Edward Sassoon (*Hythe*) 262
Mr. Summerbell (*Sunderland*) 265

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 332; Noes, 83. (Division List No. 9.)

Main Question again proposed.

Lord R. Cecil (*Marylebone, E.*) 271

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, to leave out from the second word 'the' to the end of line 22, and to insert the words 'manner prescribed by a Select Committee'"—(*Lord Robert Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Asquith 273

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 332; Noes, 85. (Division List No. 10.)

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. Asquith rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly.

The House divided: Ayes, 331; Noes, 84. (Division List No. 11.)

Ordered, That in the case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the financial resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee stage, and Report stage of the Bill (including the financial resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—(a) The Committee stage of the financial resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day; and the Bill shall, when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the whole House without Question put; (b) The Report stage of the financial resolution (if any) and the Committee stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House

and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put; (c) If the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the third allotted day. After this order comes into operation, any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this order on which the Bill is put down as the first order of the day, or on which any stage of the financial resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m. and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to conclusion), put forthwith the Question on any amendment or motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other amendments, and on any question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sitting of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business is to be brought to a conclusion, are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this order shall—(a) prevent any business which under this order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day be allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (b) prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

THE IMPRISONED WOMAN SUFFRAGISTS.

Sir William Bull (Hammersmith) 284
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 284
M. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 284

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The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 285
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 285
Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) 286
Mr. Bright 288
Mr. Gladstone 288

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

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Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—21 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 289

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 289

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Army (Appropriation Account).—To lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 51] 289

Army (Ordnance Factories).—Annual Accounts; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 52] 289

Army (Ordnance Factories) (Appropriation Account).—To lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 53] 289

Army (Clothing Factory).—Annual Accounts; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 54] 290

Military Works Acts, 1897, 1899, 1901 and 1903.—Account to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 55] 290

Chelsea Hospital (Army Prize Money and Legacy Funds).—Account to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 56] 290

Greenwich Hospital and Travers' Foundation.—Accounts; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 57] 290

Colonial Reports (Miscellaneous).—Colonial Report No. 46; to lie upon the Table 290

Colonial Reports (Miscellaneous).—Colonial Report No. 47; to lie upon the Table 290

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Factory and Workshop Acts (Special Exception—Substitution of another day for Saturday).—Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 291

Polling Districts (County of Stafford).—Order made by the Council of the County of Stafford, altering the Chase Town Polling District; to lie upon the Table 291

Pauperism (England and Wales) (Monthly Statements).—To lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 58] 291

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Cost of Extra Police in Irish Disturbed Districts 300

Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Charles McArthur (Liverpool, Kirkdale) 303

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Charles McArthur.*)

Mr. Masterman (West Ham, N.) 312
Mr. Ramsay-Macdonald (Leicester) 321

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, and add the words, 'No Bill will provide an effective remedy for ecclesiastical disorders in the Church of England which does not make provision for the separation of the Church from the State, and confer upon the Church, thus liberated from State control, the power to regulate its own affairs.' "—(*Mr. Masterman.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir G. Kekewick (Exeter) 326
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Colonel R. Williams (Dorsetshire W.) 331
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Mr. Massie (Wiltshire, Cricklade) 346
Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 352
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 357
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Mr. Bennett (Oxfordshire, Woodstock) 362
Mr. Walsh (Lancashire, Ince) 367
Mr. Haworth (Manchester, S.) 369
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 370

Mr. McArthur rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Lord R. Cecil 379

Mr. Austin Taylor rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

And, it being Five of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Business of the House.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.*)... 380
Mr John Redmond (*Waterford*) 380

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at five minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The Earl of Lovelace sat first in Parliament after the death of his brother.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with—Commercial Union Assurance Company [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company [H.L.]; Crystal Palace Company [H.L.]; Law Guarantee Trust and Accident and United Legal Indemnity Insurance Societies [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway [H.L.]; Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway [H.L.]; Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) [H.L.]; Great Western Railway [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 381

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Colonies (Miscellaneous).

No. 46. Northern Nigeria—(Report on the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1904–1905).
No. 47. Northern Nigeria—(Report on the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1905–1906).
No. 48. Nyassaland Protectorate—(Report on the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1906–1907) 381

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—No. 3958. Mexico—Budget, 1908–1909 382

Lighthouse Administration.—Report of the Royal Commission 382

Treaty Series No. 5 (1908).—Accession of Colombia to the Convention signed at Geneva, 6th July, 1906, for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and sick in armies in the field, 28th October, 1907.
Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie upon the Table... ... 382

Greenwich Hospital and Travers' Foundation (Capital and Income Accounts, 1906–1907) 382

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Factory and Workshop.—Orders by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated 26th December, 1907 382

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Closing Order made by the Urban District Council of Bray.

Order made by the Town Council of the Borough of Darlington ... 382

Polling District.—Order made by the Council of the County of Stafford, altering the Chase Town Polling District of the Lichfield Parliamentary Division... 383

Superannuation.—Treasury Minute, declaring that Henry Judd, artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate 383

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.—Annual Statistical Report; and ordered to lie on the Table 383

Mercantile Marine.—Return Laid before the House; and to be printed. [No. 14] 383

NEW BILLS.

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]—Presented by the Lord Saltoun (for the Lord Lovat); read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 15] 383

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord President (*E. Crewe*); read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 16] 383

Municipal Representation Bill [H.L.].—[First Reading.]

Lord Courtney of Penwith 384

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1^a."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 389

On Question, Bill read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 17.]

Asiatics in the Colonies.

Lord Ampthill 390

The Secretary of State for the Colonies 390

House adjourned at Five o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills (Standing Order 62 Complied with).—Draycott Gas Bill; Gosport Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; Bromley and Grays Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 392

Private Bills (Standing Order 63 Complied with).—Southwell District Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 392

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill. Read a second time, and committed 392

Swinton and Mexborough Gas Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 392

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Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 392

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—10 Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 393

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—9 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 393

British Museum.—Petition for grant in aid (King's Recommendation signified); referred to the Committee of Supply 393

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Lighthouse Administration (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commission; to lie upon the Table 393

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Town Council of the Borough of Darlington; to lie upon the Table 393

Factory and Workshop Acts (Special Exception—Employment Between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.).—Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to lie upon the Table. 393

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Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3958, to lie upon the Table. 394

Treaty Series (No. 5, 1908).—Accession of Colombia to the Convention, for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field, to lie upon the Table. 394

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Superannuation Act, 1884.—Treasury Minute, declaring that Henry Judd, Artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate: to lie upon the Table. ... 394

University of Edinburgh.—Report on the State of the Finances of the University; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 60] ... 395

University of Edinburgh.—Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 61] 395

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889, (Ordinance).—University Court Ordinance No. XXI. (Edinburgh, No. 9) (Regulations as to Bursaries, etc.); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 62] 395

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Urban District Council of Bray; to lie upon the Table. 395

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NEW BILLS.

Representation of the People Bill.—To be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 88] 459

Lights on Vehicles (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 89] 459

Homework Regulation Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 5th June, and to be printed. [Bill 90] 460

Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 91] 460

Railway (Eight Hours) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 17th March, and to be printed. [Bill 92] 460

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.
Earl Percy (Kensington, S.) 460

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, while welcoming the principle of an Agreement with Russia in regard to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet, is of opinion that the terms of the Convention, while involving at several points a material sacrifice of British interests, still leave room for international misunderstandings of a kind which both the contracting Powers desire to avoid."—(*Earl Percy.*)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick) 476
The Earl of Ronaldshay (Middlesex, Hornsey) 497
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) 508
Sir H. Norman (Wolverhampton, S.) 513
Mr. Joseph Walton (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley) 517
Mr. Ellis Griffith (Anglesey) 522
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) 524
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Sir J. Jardine (Roxburghshire) 531
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 532
Sir H. Cotton (Nottingham, E.) 539
Mr. Smeaton (Stirlingshire) 540

Mr. Lynch (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon) 543
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 550
The Secretary of State for India (Mr. Morley, Montrose Burghs) ... 559

Motion, by leave withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.—Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at one minute before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill complied with: Tyne Improvement.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table 565

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]—Read 2ª (according to Order) 565

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill.—Standing Order No. 86A considered (according to Order) and dispensed with; leave given for the Bill to be read 1ª 565

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 2ª. 565

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]—Presented, and (pursuant to leave given this day), read 1ª; and Bill referred to the Examiners ... 565

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.] Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 565

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Certified Inebriate Reformatories (Enteric Fever at Brentry)—Report by R. W. Branthwaite, esquire, M.D., D.P.H., Presented (by Command) and ordered to lie upon the Table 565

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.—Annual Report of the finances of the University of Aberdeen 566

National Debt (Military Savings Banks).—Account of the gross amount of all moneys received and paid by the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt on account of the Fund for Military Savings Bank, from 19th September, 1845, to the 5th January, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 566

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.—University Court Ordinance, No. 21 (Edinburgh No. 9). Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 18)... 566

Patents and Designs Bills [H.L.] [SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of Granard 566

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Granard.*)
The Marquess of Salisbury 566
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 567
On Question, Bill read 2ª (according to order) and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Fatal Accidents (Damages) (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] [SECOND READING.]
Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.
The Earl of Granard 567
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Granard.*)
On Question, Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [H.L.]
Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.
Lord Courtney of Penwith 569
Order for the Second Reading discharged, and Bill (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT.
The Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe 569
The Earl of Carlisle 573
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*The Earl of Portsmouth*) ... 574
Viscount Midleton 576
The Earl of Portsmouth 577

THE TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT—THE MILITIA.
The Duke of Bedford 578
Viscount Hardinge 597
Lord Raglan 599
Earl Bathurst 602
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 604
Earl Cawdor 605
Moved, "That the Debate be adjourned to Thursday next."
On Question, Motion agreed to, and adjourned accordingly.

Moveable Dwellings Bill [H.L.]—Presented by the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh; read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 19.] 605

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 18TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

New Writ.—New Writ for the County of Carmarthen (Western Division), in the room of John Lloyd Morgan, esquire, K.C. (Recorder of the Borough of Swansea).—(*Mr. Whiteley.*) 606

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 606

Holderness Water Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed ... 606

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Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 606

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 606

Divorce Bills.—Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, the Lord Advocate, Mr. Attorney-General, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Cave, Sir David Brynmor Jones, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, and Mr. Solicitor-General were nominated members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 606

PETITIONS.

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—21 Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 607

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—35 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 607

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 607

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Inebriate Reformatories (Enteric Fever at Brentry).—Report by R. W. Branthwaite, esquire, M.D., D.P.H., His Majesty's Inspector under the Inebriates Acts; to lie upon the Table 607

Naval Works Acts, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1903 and 1905.—Account presented, showing the amount of Money issued out of the Consolidated Fund; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 63] 607

National Debt (Military Savings Banks).—Account presented, of the Gross Amount of all Moneys received and paid by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt on account of the Fund for Military Savings Banks; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 64] ... 608

University of Aberdeen.—Abstract of Accounts of the University of Aberdeen; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 65] 608

Light Railways Act, 1896.—London and North Western Railway (Dyserth and Newmarket Light Railway Order 1908); to lie upon the Table ... 608

Light Railways Act, 1896.—(Stottesdon, Kinlet, and Billingsley Light Railway Order, 1908); to lie upon the Table 608

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NEW MEMBER SWORN.—William Middlebrook, esquire, for the Borough of Leeds (South Division) ... 654

STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.—1. "That, in the case of the Camborne Water, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill." 2. "That, in the case of the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill." 3. "That, in the case of the Dover Graving Docks, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill." 4. "That, in the case of the Margate Corporation Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the Promoters have leave to insert the additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit." 5. "That, in the case of the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of the 'Grimsby Rural District Council' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to ... 654

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NEW BILL.

Parliamentary Voters (Registration) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 93] 655

PRIVILEGES.—Mr. Attorney-General, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Mr. Balfour, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Ellis, Mr. MacNeill, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham) were nominated Members of the Committee of Privileges.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the Quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 655

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) (SALARIES, &c.).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 656

Resolved, that for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, it is expedient to authorise—(i) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of the salaries of the chairman and of each of the other members of the Land Court; (ii) the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament, of—(a) the salaries and remuneration of the Agricultural Commissioners and other persons appointed or employed by them and by the Land Court, and the expenses incurred by the Land Court and the Agricultural Commissioners in the execution of their duties; (b) an annual sum not exceeding eighty-five thousand pounds for the use of the Agricultural Commissioners; (c) compensation in certain cases to members and officers of the Crofters Commission.—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 656

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Mr. Lambton (Durham, S.E.) 674
Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 683

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'that' in order to insert the words 'this House, while desirous of increasing the number of small owners and occupiers in Scotland wherever they are likely to prosper, declines to proceed with a Bill which establishes in the Lowlands a system of land tenure alien to the traditions of the people and utterly unsuited to the conditions of agriculture.'"—(*Mr. Lambton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. H. J. Tennant (Berwickshire) 685
Mr. Murray (Aberdeenshire, E.) 688
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 691
Mr. Munro-Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 696
Mr. Barnes (Glasgow, Blackfriars) 699
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 704
The Lord Advocate (Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs) 712
Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 718

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And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of the 13th February.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.

The House divided:—Ayes, 353; Noes, 106. (Division List No. 12.)

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 247; Noes, 103. (Division List No. 13.)

Bill read a second time, and committed, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February, to a Committee of the Whole House for To morrow.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL DIVISION (NUMBERS INCORRECTLY REPORTED).—Mr. Joseph Pease and Viscount Valentia, the Tellers in the Aye Division Lobby, in the Division this day on the Question, "That the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill be now read a second time," came to the Table and stated that they had erroneously reported the number of the Ayes as 247 instead of 347, which was the proper number.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER directed the Clerk to correct the number in the Journal accordingly; Ayes, 347; Noes, 103.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Dundalk Urban District Council Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed.

LOCAL TAXATION.

Mr. Hedges (Kent, Tonbridge) 727
Mr. Rogers (Wiltshire, Devizes) 737

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Local taxation and the relations between Local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between Local and Imperial obligations."—(*Mr. Hedges.*)

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 741
Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon) 746
Mr. Mildmay (Devonshire, Totnes) 750
Mr. Luke White (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose) 758
Mr. Jowett (Bradford, W.) 760
Mr. Stuart (Sunderland) 761
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) 766
Mr. Hugh Law (Donegal, W.) 769

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Local Taxation and the relations between Local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between Local and Imperial obligations."—(*Mr. Hedges.*)

Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee 771

WORKMEN'S INSURANCE (GERMANY).—Return ordered, "Showing, in terms of English money, the latest available annual statement with reference to Workmen's Insurance in the German Empire 771

PUBLIC PETITIONS.—Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills;

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. Edward Barry, Mr. Burt, Mr. Charles Craig, Mr. Ellis Griffith, Mr. Leicester Harmsworth, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Wynford Philipps, Mr. Agar-Robartes, Mr. Charles Shaw, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Mr. Wills, and Mr. Henry Joseph Wilson.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 771

In pursuance of Standing Order No. 1, "Sittings of the House,"—I hereby nominate—

The right hon. Charles Beilby Stuart Wortley,
Sir William Holland,
Mr. Charles Fenwick,
Mr. Alfred Hutton, and
Mr. Patrick Joseph Power

to act during this session as temporary Chairmen of Committees when requested by the Chairman of Ways and Means 772

JAMES W. LOWTHER,
18*th February*, 1908. *Speaker.*

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS complied with:—Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway [H.L.]; London Electric Supply [H.L.]; London Motor Roadways Approach [H.L.]
The same were ordered to lie on the Table 773

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.]; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.]—(Petition for additional Provision); Malvern Hills Bill [H.L.]; Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill [H.L.]; Ards and Bangor Railways Bill; Dover Graving Docks Bill; Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill.—Examiners' Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next 773

Crystal Palace Company Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 773

Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed 773

Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 773

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]; Audenshaw and Saddleworth Urban District Councils Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.]; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Monmouthshire County Council Bill [H.L.]; Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Swansea Valley Gas Bill [H.L.]; Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [H.L.]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 773

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]; Herne Bay Pier Bill [H.L.]; Huddersfield Water Bill [H.L.]; Magee Presbyterian College (Londonderry) Bill [H.L.]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.]; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Committed 774

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Light Railways Act, 1896.

I. Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners, (Portsdown and Horndean Light Railway (Extension, etc.) Order, 1908). (Dyserth and Newmarket Light Railway) Order, 1908 774

II. Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, (Stottesdon to Billingsley Railway Order) 774

Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876, Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897.—Joint Report, on the pollution of the river Leven (Dumbartonshire) by Mr. W. S. Curphey 775

Navy (Battle Practice).—Result of battle practice in His Majesty's Fleet, 1907. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table ... 775

Census of Production Act, 1908.—Rules made by the Board of Trade, dated 12th February, 1908 775

Committals (Ireland).—Returns from the Clerks of the Crown and Peace of the number of persons committed for trial in 1907.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 775

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION.

The Lords following, viz.—

M. Ripon (*L. Privy Seal*).
D. Bedford.
D. Northumberland.
M. Lansdowne.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Rosse.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
V. Churchill
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Granard (*E. Granard*).
L. Denman.
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Newton.

with the Chairman of Committees, were appointed a Committee to select and propose to the House the names of the five Lords to form a Select Committee for the consideration of each opposed Private Bill 775

STANDING COMMITTEE.—Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed for the consideration of such Public Bills as may be committed to it by the House 775

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

E. Jersey.
E. Waldegrave.
V. Churchill.
L. Balfour.
L. Granard (*E. Granard*).
L. Denman.
L. Kintore (*E. Kintore*).
L. Laurence. 776

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STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Appointed : The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

E. Crewe (*L. President*).
D. Bedford.
D. Marlborough.
D. Northumberland.
M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.
E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Cadogan.
E. Howe.
E. Amherst.
E. Camperdown.
E. Dartrey.
E. Lytton.
E. Carrington.
V. Sidmouth.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Barnard.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Poltimore.
L. Kintore (*E. Kintore*).
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Hylton.
L. Fermanagh (*E. Erne*).
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Newton.
L. Welby.
L. Ludlow.

All petitions relating to the Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present session referred to the Committee unless otherwise ordered 776

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Select Committee appointed : The Lords following with the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, and the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

D. Northumberland.
M. Bath.
M. Cholmondeley.
M. Breadalbane.
E. Beauchamp (*L. Steward*).
E. Clarendon.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Spencer.
E. Mount-Edgecumbe.
E. Belmore.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Ancaster.
E. Carrington.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.
V. Gordon (*E. Aberdeen*).
V. Cross.
V. Peel.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Rosebery (*E. Rosebery*).
L. Kintore (*E. Kintore*).
L. Belper.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk-Bretton.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Welby.
L. Burghclere.
L. Colebroke. 776

THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER.

Lord Stanmore 777
The Earl of Carlisle 780
Viscount Ridley 782
The Earl of Plymouth 782
The Lord President of the Council (The Earl of Crewe) 783
The Marquess of Londonderry 784

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THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

Lord Eversley 785
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) ... 785

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Tyne Improvement Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time 786

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) Bill [Annuities].—Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of the Revenues of India, of any Annuities created under any Act of the present session to provide for the vesting of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company in the Secretary of State in Council of India, and of any costs, charges, and expenses incurred under such Act (King's Recommendation signified). To-morrow.—(*Mr. Sydney Buxton* 787

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].

And, also, a Bill intituled, Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS] 787

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Ordered (under Section 7 of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered upon Friday 787

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Ordered (under Section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered upon Friday 787

PETITIONS.

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 787

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—13 Petitions for Legislation; to lie upon the Table 787

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—13 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 787

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made by the Board of Trade under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 788

Committals (Ireland).—Returns from the Clerks of the Crown and Peace of the number of persons committed for trial in 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table 788

Rivers Pollution Prevention Act and Public Health (Scotland) Act.—Joint Report, on the pollution of the River Leven (Dumbartonshire), by Mr. W. S. Curphey; to lie upon the Table 788

Navy (Battle Practice).—Result of Battle Practice in His Majesty's Fleet, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table... 788

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Paper Laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Bridlington Piers and Harbours, Copy of Abstract of the General Annual Account for the year ending 26th July, 1907 [by Act] 788

Land Registry.—Return ordered, "showing the work done in the Land Registry, in each of the years 1906 and 1907, respectively, under various Acts 788

Deaths from Starvation or Accelerated by Privation (London).—Address for "Return of the number of Deaths in the administrative county of London, in the year 1907 790

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Ancient Monuments 790
Liscannor Harbour Works 791
Irish Land Purchase 792
Frivolous Police Prosecutions at Belfast 792
Evicted Tenants—Case of Matthew Brady 793
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Transfer of Native Lands to British Central Africa Company 794
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Temporary Courts at Royal Courts of Justice 796
Imprisonment of Juveniles 797
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Exports of Worn-out Horses 798
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Illegal Sale of Beer at Ipswich 800
Compensation for Damage to Horses of Territorial Yeomanry 801
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Facilities for Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill 802

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The Navy Estimates 803
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The Licensing Bill ... 811

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St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Swansea ... 815

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Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Scotland ... 817

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Wood Quay Wall, Galway ... 818

Limerick Evicted Tenants ... 819

Doongeelagh Estate, Killadoon ... 819

King Harman Estate, Longford ... 820

Viscount Southwell's Estate... 820

Ennistymon Fair ... 821

Mr. Beamish's Gortrae Estate ... 823

Revolver Firing on Licensed Premises ... 823

Lord Gough and his Tenantry ... 825

Lord Gough's Untenanted Lands ... 826

Forthill Burial Ground, Galway ... 826

Waterford Guardians and their Engineer ... 827

Belturbet Council Election ... 828

Maintenance of Discharged Prisoners at Armagh... 829

Lord Southwell's Estate ... 829

Belfast Linen Industry ... 830

Corboy Postboy's Wages ... 830

Politics in the County Court ... 831

HOME WORK.—Ordered, That the Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Home Work in the last session of Parliament be referred to the Select Committee on Home Work.—(*Sir Thomas Whittaker*)... 832

NEW BILLS.

Prohibition of Medical Practice by Companies Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 3rd March, and to be printed. [Bill 94] ... 832

Public Health Act (1875) **Amendment** (**Water Rights**) **Bill.**—To be read a second time upon Monday, 2nd March, and to be printed. [Bill 95] ... 832

Building Lands (**Scotland**) **Bill.**—To be read a second upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 96]... 832

Rights of Way (**Scotland**) **Bill.**—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 97] ... 833

Nurses' Registration (**No. 2**) **Bill.**—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 98] ... 833

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Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 99] 833

Purchase of Land (England and Wales) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 100] 833

Small Holdings.

Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 833

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend The Small Holdings Act, 1892."—(*Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

Mr. Winfrey (Norfolk, S.W.) 836

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, Colonel Long, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Bridgeman, Mr. Lane-Fox, Mr. William Nicholson, Mr. Arthur Stanley, Mr. Ellis Davis, and Mr. Mildmay.

Small Holdings Bill.—"To amend the Small Holdings Act, 1892," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 101.]

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

The Lord Advocate (Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs) 837

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 845

Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) 859

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day-six months.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Sutherland (Elgin Burghs) 865

Mr. Bonar Law (Camberwell, Dulwich) 868

Mr. J. M. Henderson (Aberdeenshire, W.) 879

Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 883

The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Ure, Linlithgowshire) 888

And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 363; Noes, 99. (Division List No. 14.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February, to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.

POLITICAL FUNDS.

Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) 899

Mr. Edmund Lamb (Herefordshire, Leominster) 905

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House regrets the secrecy under which political funds are accumulated and administered, and regards such secrecy as a peril to its privileges and character." (*Mr. Belloc.*)

Mr. Lea (St. Pancras, E.) 906

Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) 914

Mr. Buckmaster (Cambridge) 916

Mr. Soares (Devonshire, Barnstaple) 922

Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, after the word 'administered' to insert the words 'especially the way in which large sums, derived from the secret funds of the Tariff Reform League and other similar societies, are spent in electoral contests without being returned in the candidates' expenses.'"—(*Mr. Buckmaster*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 923
Mr. Ellis Griffith (*Anglesey*) 926
Sir Randal Cremer (*Shoreditch, Haggerston*) 927
The Solicitor-General (*Sir Samuel Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.*)... ... 929
Mr. Markham (*Nottinghamshire, Mansfield*) 931
Captain J. Craig (*Down, E.*) 932
Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) 935

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"In line 2, after the word 'funds,' to insert the words 'at the disposal of the Liberal Party or."—(*Captain J. Craig.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted in the proposed Amendment."

The House divided:—Ayes, 53; Noes, 153. (Division List No. 15.)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The House divided:—Ayes, 134; Noes, 60. (Division List No. 16.)

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Colonel SEELY rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question now be put"; but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question, and the debate stood adjourned.

Adjourned at seventeen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS complied with: North British Mercantile Insurance Company.

STANDING ORDERS not complied with: Leith Burgh; Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies.
The same were ordered to lie on the Table 941

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—The Order of yesterday referring the Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next discharged 941

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]: Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 941

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Trade Reports: Annual Series.—No. 3959. Italy (South Italy); No. 3960. Germany (Finances for 1907, with Estimates for 1908) 941

Board of Education (Regulations for Certified Efficient Schools).—Regulations and conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education under Section 48 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, of elementary schools in England.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table 941

Patents and Designs Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment, and re-committed to the Standing Committee 942

Fatal Accidents (Damages) (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next 942

VOLUNTEERS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

The Earl of Donoughmore 942
The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe 942
The Under-Secretary of State for War (The Earl of Portsmouth) 945
Viscount Midleton 945
The Earl of Portsmouth 946
Earl Cawdor 947
Lord Lucas 947
The Duke of Bedford 947

TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT—THE MILITIA.—Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, and on the following Questions put by the Duke of Bedford—(1) If non-training bounty will be paid to men belonging to the disbanded Militia battalions; (2) If the Special Infantry Reserve will be at once equipped in the same manner as the Regular Reserve; (3) If any additional officers will be added to the present establishment of officers serving with the Line in consequence of the posting of Line officers to the third Special Reserve battalions.

The Earl of Portsmouth 948
The Marquess of Salisbury 961
Lord Abinger 972
Lord Lucas 973

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).—Derby Gas Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 976

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].—Standing Orders not complied with: Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies 976

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Standing Orders not complied with, viz.: Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 976

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PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].—Standing Orders complied with: North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, etc.).

And they have certified that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in the following case, viz.: Leith Burgh 977

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS].—Standing Orders not complied with, viz.: Leith Burgh [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 977

Dover Graving Docks Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time 977

Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time 977

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) [Annuities].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed "That it is expedient to authorise the creation of Annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings and three pence, agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending the 31st day of December, 1907."—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

Mr. Alexander Cross (*Glasgow, Camlachie*) 978
The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (*Sir Henry Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.*) 978
Sir Henry Kimber (*Wandsworth*) 979
Mr. Rees (*Montgomery Boroughs*) 979
Mr. Bowles (*Lambeth, Norwood*) 979

And, it being Three of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee Report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

PETITIONS.

Club's Regulation.—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 980

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—58 Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 980

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—57 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 980

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Board of Education.—Regulations and Conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education under Section 48 of The Elementary Education Act, 1876, of Elementary Schools in England; to lie upon the Table ... 980

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3959 and 3960 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table ... 980

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Johnstown Estate, Co. Meath ... 981
Master's First Aid Certificate ... 981
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Post Office Life Insurance ... 1028
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Enfield Lock Factory—West's Claim for Compensation 1035
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Lord Ashtown's Gamekeepers 1039
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SELECTION (UNOPPOSED BILL COMMITTEES) (PANEL).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had selected the following Seven Members to be the Panel to serve on Unopposed Bill Committees under Standing Order No. 109: Sir David Brynmor Jones, Mr. Paulton, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Beale, Mr. Hills, and Mr. Mooney.

Report to lie upon the Table 1045

NEW BILLS

Sale of Whisky Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 7th April, and to be printed. [Bill 102] 1045

Absent Voters Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 7th April, and to be printed. [Bill 103] 1046

Sale of Food and Drugs Act (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 104] ... 1046

Aged Pensioners Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 105] 1046

Places of Worship (Sites) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 106]... 1046

Places of Worship (Enfranchisement Bill.)—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 107] 1046

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 108] 1048

Primogeniture Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed.]Bill 109] 1048

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 314; Noes, 73. (Division List No. 17) ... 1048

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.*) 1051

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Coal Mines Regulation Acts, 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting hours of work below ground."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

Mr. Laurence Hardy (*Kent, Ashford*) 1053

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.—"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Acts, 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting hours of work below ground," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, next, and to be printed. [Bill 110.]

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES), 1907–8.

Revenue Departments.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £260,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Salaries and Expenses of, the Post Office, including Telegraphs."

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1055
Mr. Claude Hay (*Shoreditch, Hoxton*) 1071
Mr. John Ward (*Stoke-on-Trent*) 1079
Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) 1084
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestershire, E.*) 1089
Sir Francis Edwards (*Radnor*) 1093
Sir C. Hill (*Shrewsbury*) 1096
Mr. Wardle (*Stockport*) 1099
Mr. McCrae (*Edinburgh, E.*) 1104
Mr. Pike Pease (*Darlington*) 1105
Mr. Wood (*Glasgow, St. Rollox*) 1106
Mr. Summerbell (*Sunderland*) 1107
Mr. Seaverns (*Lambeth, Brixton*) 1109
Mr. Staveley Hill (*Staffordshire, Kingswinford*) 1111
Mr. Vivian (*Birkenhead*) 1113
Mr. Sydney Buxton 1114
Mr. James O'Connor (*Wicklow, W.*) 1119
Mr. Wiles (*Islington, S.*) 1123
Mr. William Rutherford (*Liverpool, West Derby*)... 1121

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £259,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Watson Rutherford*).

Mr. Lonsdale (*Armagh, Mid.*) 1126
Mr. Seddon (*Lancashire, Newton*) 1128
Mr. R. Duncan (*Lanarkshire, Govan*) 1129
Mr. T. Davies (*Fulham*) 1129
Mr. T. L. Corbett (*Down, N.*) 1130

Mr. JOSEPH PEASE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 200, Noes, 47. (Division List No. 18.)

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Question put accordingly, "That a sum, not exceeding £259,900, be granted for the said Service."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 11; Noes, 195. (Division List No. 19.)
Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS III.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Royal Irish Constabulary."

Mr. Hayden (Roscommon, S.) 1135

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £4,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Hayden.*)

Mr. John Redmond (Waterford) 1141
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1147
Mr. Richardson (Nottingham, S.) 1151
Mr. Cullinan (Tipperary, S.) 1152
Captain J. Craig (Down, E.) 1154
Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) 1156
The Attorney-General for Ireland (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange) ... 1161
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 1164
Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) 1168

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 63; Noes, 142. (Division List No. 20.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS IV.

3. £6,000 (Supplementary), Board of Education.

Sir Philip Magnus (London University) 1171
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (Mr. Lough, Islington, W.) 1175
Sir W. J. Collins (St. Pancras, W.) 1176

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported this day.

Committee to sit again this day.

SUPPLY [10TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question proposed [11th February], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the First Resolution, 'That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services viz.:—

	£.
Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc.—	
E (*a*) Grants for the Extinction of Debts - - -	350,000
E (*b*) Expenses of County Associations - - -	8,000
	358,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes - - - - -	357,900
	100'"

Question again proposed.

Mr. Victor Cavendish (Derbyshire, W.) 1177
Viscount Valentia (Oxford) 1178
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 1180

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The Financial Secretary to the War Office (*Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.*) 1181
Colonel Seely (*Liverpool, Abercromby*) 1183
Viscount Morpeth (*Birmingham, S.*) 1184
Colonel Herbert (*Monmouthshire, S.*) 1185
Mr. Carlisle (*Hertfordshire, St. Albans*) 1186
Mr. Buchanan 1187
Mr. Rees (*Montgomery Boroughs*) 1188

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Joseph Pease,*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.—New Writ for the county of Worcester (Western or Bewdley Division), in the room of Alfred Baldwin, esquire, deceased—(*Mr. Henry Forster*) 1189

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) [Annuities].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question again proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the creation of annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings and three pence, agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company, and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending the 31st day of December 1907."—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next 1189

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS]. Considered; Amendments made. Bill to be read the third time upon Tuesday next 1189

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Considered; to be read the third time upon Tuesday next ... 1190

Public Office, Sites (Extension Bill.)—Ordered, "That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill, with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills 1190

PETITIONS.

Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Children).—13 Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1190

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—10 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1190

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Africa (No. 1, 1908).—Further Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1190

Army (Memorandum on Estimates).—Memorandum of the Secretary of State; to lie upon the Table 1190

University of Aberdeen.—Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Aberdeen to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 66.] 1190

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES

Rateable Value of Admiralty Land near Greenock 1191
Reduction of the Coastguard Service 1191
Rathkenny Farm—Application of Leonard 1191
War Office—Trade Union Rates of Pay 1192
Scottish Tailors and Officers outfits 1192
Militia Officers and Active Service... 1192
Militia Officers on the Special Reserve 1193
Case of John Gillespie, late Inniskilling Fusiliers 1193
Territorial Army—Grants to Officers' Outfits 1194
Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans in Workhouses 1194
Army Boy Recruits sent on Foreign Service 1195
Able-Bodied Paupers 1195

Sweated Industries Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.
Mr. Toulmin (Bury, Lancashire) 1196
Mr. Alden (Middlesex, Tottenham) 1201

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Toulmin.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1205
Captain J. Craig (Down, E.) 1211

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Frederick Banbury*).

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Villiers (Brighton) 1213
Mr. Curran (Durham, Jarrow) 1215
Mr. Mond (Chester) 1216
Mr. Hills (Durham) 1219
Mr. Verney (Buckinghamshire, N.) 1220
Mr. Gwynn (Galway) 1221
Mr. Pike Pease (Darlington) 1223
Mr. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 1224
Mr. Goulding (Worcester) 1227
Mr. Chiozza Money (Paddington, N.) 1230

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Mr. Richardson (Nottingham, S.) 1233
Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 1234
Mr. Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) 1235
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 1239
Mr. Butcher (Cambridge University) 1249
Sir Thomas Whittaker (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley) 1251
Mr. Lupton (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) 1252
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) 1256
Mr. Harmood-Banner (Liverpool, Everton) 1258

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to the Select Committee on Home Work.—*(Mr. Toulmin.)*

Scottish Land Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—*(Sir E. Tennant.)*

Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 1260
Sir E. Tennant (Salisbury) 1261
Sir F. Banbury 1261
The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 1261
Sir John Dewar (Inverness) 1263

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—*(Sir John Dewar.)*

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 44; Noes, 184. (Division List No. 21.)

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

Police Superannuation Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE.—Select Committee appointed to examine the Publications printed by order of this House or presented to it through Public Departments and to call attention to any case in which unnecessary expense has been incurred.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of: Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Cleland, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. William Jones, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Maddison, Mr. John Robertson, and Mr. Toulmin.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—*(Mr Whiteley)* 1267

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies Bill [H.L.]; North British and Mercantile Insurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Presented, read 1ª; and referred to the Examiners 1269

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.].—Presented, and read 1ª 1269

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RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Africa, No. 1, 1908.—Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo 1269

Army (Estimates).—Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War relating to the Army Estimates for 1908–1909.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1269

Lunacy.—Return of the number of visits made and number of patients seen by the several Commissioners in Lunacy... 1269

National Debt (Savings Banks and Friendly Societies).—Account of the gross amount of all sums received and paid by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt on account of banks for savings and friendly societies in Great Britain and Ireland 1269

Prisons, England and Wales (Appellants under Criminal Appeal Act, 1907).—Draft rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department 1270

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889.—Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Aberdeen.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1270

Bridlington Piers and Harbour.—Abstract of the annual general account for the year ended 26th July, 1907; delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1270

THE CONGO FREE STATE.

The Earl of Mayo 1270

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty for further correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo, and other Papers, if any, bearing on the grants and title deeds of companies in the Free State."—(*The Earl of Mayo.*)

Earl Cromer 1277
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1286
Lord Clifford of Chudleigh... 1288
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice* ... 1290
Lord Bishop of Southwark 1298
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1301
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1303

On Question, Motion agreed to.

MILK-BLENDED BUTTER.

The Earl of Onslow... 1306
The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (*Earl Carrington*) 1307

Fatal Accidents (Damages) (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1308

House adjourned at Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY 24TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.—New Writ for the Borough of Hastings, in the room of Harvey Du Cros, esquire (Chiltern Hundreds).—(*Mr Henry Forster*) 1308

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH—Seaham Harbour Dock Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 1308

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—London United Tramways.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1309

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH—Croydon and Southern Districts Tramways; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways 1309

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Croydon and Southern Districts Tramways [Lords]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committe on Standing Orders 1309

Bromley and Crays Gas Bill.—Draycott Gas Bill; Gosport Gas Bill; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill; Southwell District Gas Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 1309

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) [Annuities].—Resolution reported:—"That it is expedient to authorise the creation of Annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings, and three pence agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company, and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half year ending the 31st day of December, 1907."

Resolution agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Madras Railway Company (Purchase) Bill that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.—(*Sir Henry Fowler*) 1309

PETITIONS.

Licensed Premises Exclusion of Children.—2 Petitions for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1310

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—5 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1310

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1310

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Land Forces Great Britain and Foreign Countries.—Return; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 67] 1310

East India (Bombay Political Department).—Return; to lie upon the Table. 1310

Compensation on Non-renewal of Licenses.—Return; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 68] 1310

Prisons (England and Wales).—Draft Rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department; to lie upon the Table and to printed. [No. 69] 1311

National Debt (Savings Banks and Friendly Societies).—Annual Account to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 70] 1311

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House—(Lunacy).—Return of the number of Visits made and the number of Patients seen by the several Commissioners in Lunacy during the six months ending on 31st December, 1907 [by Act] 1311

National Schools (Ireland).—Return ordered, "showing the number of National Schools in Ireland; the number of managers, clerical and lay, of the various dominations; and the forms of agreement they have executed with their teachers."—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*) 1311

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Imports on Cereals 1311
Telegraphists and Postal Duties 1312
Piece Work and Day Work Rates at Holloway and Mount Pleasant Factory ... 1312
County Medical Officers of Health 1313
Overcrowding at Renfrew Road Workhouse 1313
Proceedings against Mr. Harry Persse 1314
Administration of the Charity of John Wild 1315
Exemption of Scottish Members of Parliament from Jury Service 1315
Increased pay for Irish Sub-postmasters 1316
Purchase of Postal Orders Free of Poundage by Sailors 1316
Pay of Postal Servants 1317
Training of Boy Artificers 1318
Vacancies for Engine Room Artificers 1318
Irish Land Finance 1319
Assistance for the Cultivation of Beet Sugar 1319
The Hop Industry Inquiry 1319
Glanders 1319
Bonuses and Income-Tax 1320
Production and Imports of Yeast 1320
Distilling Regulations 1321
Extra Police at Gort 1321
Sale of the Buxton Estate, County Galway 1322
Purchase of the Estate of the late Captain Segrave, County Galway 1322
Purchase of Untenanted Land in County Leitrim... 1323
Ballinamore and Ballyconnell Navigation Rate 1323
Evicted Tenants—Application of Patrick Phelan 1324
Eviction of Timothy Murphy 1324
Evicted Tenants—Restoration of Edward O'Brien 1325
Evicted Tenants—Case of James Gore 1325

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Purchase of Untenanted Land in County Limerick 1325
Writers at the Army Clothing Factory 1326
Inland Revenue Returns and National Prosperity 1327
The "Kilmorack" 1327
Telephone Rates in England and Norway 1327
Inadequate Accommodation at Margate Post Office 1328
Postal Deliveries at Churchill and Letterkenny 1329
Irish Historical Manuscripts 1329
Fireproofing of National Gallery Extension 1329
Imprisoned Women Suffragists 1330
Increase of Factory Inspection Staff 1330
Accident at Messrs Atkinson Brothers' Works at Sheffield 1330
Navigation of the River Avon between Christchurch and Salisbury 1331
Post Office Savings Bank 1331
Criminal Cases disposed of by European Collector Magistrates in India ... 1332
Irish Land Purchase—Application for Grant 1333
Compensation for Criminal Injury in Ireland 1333
Navigation Works on the North-East Coast of Ireland 1333
Irrecoverable Rates 1334
Government Grant for Primary Education 1334
Congestion of Business at County Dublin County Court... 1335
Purchase of Estate of Mrs. G. C. P. Mahon of Stokestown 1336
Purchase of the Estate of Mr. Arthur O'Connor 1337
Purchase of Farms at Lacken and Tromore, County Rosscommon 1337
Deposit of Refuse on Vacant Ground at Shore Road, Belfast 1338

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Black Watch Volunteer Battalions... 1339
Shambles Barracks, Galway 1339
Officers of the Militia Submarine Miners 1340
Volunteers and the Conditions of Enlistment 1340
Thanksgiving Church Parade 1341
Reduction of the Volunteer Force 1342
Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers 1342
Woolwich Ordnance Factories 1343
Territorial Army Field Batteries 1343
Volunteer Battalion Debts 1345
Yeomanry Horses 1346
Army Reservists Abroad 1347
Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers... 1347
South African Garrison 1348
Rifle and Bayonet Lengths 1349
Mortality in the Rand Mines 1350
Dinizulu 1351
Martial Law in Zululand 1354

British East African Protectorate 1354
Persia and Turkey 1355
Falkland Islands 1356
Deaths under Anaesthetics 1356
London Tailors Workshops 1356
Factory Inspection in West London 1357
Sunday Trading 1358
Dartmoor Convict Mutiny 1358
Laundry Inspection 1359
Bottled Milk 1360
Census of Labour 1360
The Royal Commission on Whisky 1361
Jersey Fodder Importation Regulations 1363
Foreign Animals Wharf at Alderney 1364
Hay Imports and Glanders 1365
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Imports of Foreign Fodder 1366
Cattle Importation Regulations 1366
Scottish Fishery Regulations 1367
Scottish Congested Districts Board 1368
Scottish Cattle Sale Yards 1368
Glasgow Cattle Sales 1368
Barlinnie Gaol—Discharge of Prisoners 1369
No Licensing Bill for Scotland 1370
Illegal Trawling in the Moray Firth 1371
Irish Agricultural Inspectors.—Mr. Porter's Salary 1372

Divorce Law Amendment Bill.—Order for Second Reading upon Friday, read, and discharged.
Bill withdrawn 1373

NEW BILLS.

Polling Districts and Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 111.] 1373

Elementary Education (England and Wales).

The President of the Board of Education (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) 1373

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to introduce a Bill to regulate the conditions on which public money may be applied in aid of elementary education in England and Wales."—(*Mr. McKenna.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1389
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1397
Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (Leicestershire) 1404
Mr. Masterman (West Ham, N.) 1410
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 1417
Mr. Perks (Lincolnshire South) 1424
Mr. Butcher (Cambridge University) 1429
Sir Alfred Thomas (Glamorganshire, E.) 1433
Mr. Acland (Yorkshire, Richmond) 1434

Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 1442
Mr. Yoxall (Nottingham, W.) 1446
Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) 1449
Mr. Montagu (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton) 1454
Mr. F. E. Smith (Liverpool, Walton) 1458
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.) 1469
Sir William Anson (Oxford University) 1478
Mr. McKenna 1484

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. McKenna, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Lough.

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—"To regulate the conditions on which public money may be applied in aid of Elementary Education in England and Wales; and for other purposes incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 112.]

Adjourned at two minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 25th FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Standing Orders complied with:—Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc.; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc.

Also the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with:—London United Tramways; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways; Croydon and Southern District Tramways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1489

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Persia, No. 1 (1908).—Despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, relating to British Policy in Persia.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1489

Shop Hours Act, 1904 (County of Anglesey).—Order made by the County Council of Anglesey 1489

Penal Servitude Acts, 1853-1891 (Conditional Licence).

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1489

Colonies: Annual.—No. 555. St. Vincent (Report for 1906–1907) 1490

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill, 1908.—Memorandum of the Board of Education on the financial proposals in connection with the Education Bill, 1908 1490

China, No. 1 (1908).—Opium question in China... 1490

Railway, etc., Bills.—Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and Provisional Orders of Session 1908, relating to railways, canals, tramways, harbours, and tidal waters, and the supply of electricity, gas and water ... 1490

NEW BILLS.

Agricultural Holdings Bill [H.L.] (No. 20); and Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [H L.] (No. 21).—Were presented by the Earl Carrington; read 1ª, and to be printed 1490

Small Holdings and Allotments (Scotland) Bill [H.L.]. [SECOND READING.]
Order of the day for the Second Reading read.
The Earl of Camperdown 1490
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1499
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1502
The Earl Rosebery 1508
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1512
Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1514
Lord Courtney of Penwith 1517
Moved, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)
On Question, their Lordships divided :—Contents, 32 ; Not-contents, 137.
Resolved in the negative : Then the original Motion agreed to : Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

MACEDONIA.
Lord Newton 1519
Moved, "That a humble Address be presented to His Majesty for Papers with regard to the progress of reforms in Macedonia.—(*Lord Newton.*)
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) ... 1525
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1536
On Question, Motion agreed to and carried accordingly.
House adjourned at five minutes past Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 25TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH.—Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill.
Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1540

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill (Standing Orders Applicable thereto Complied with) 1541

Derby Gas Bill.—Dover Graving Docks Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill. Finchley Urban District Council Bill (by Order); Leicester Corporation Bill (by Order). Read a second time and committed... ... 1541

STANDING ORDERS—Ordered, That Mr. Shackleton be discharged from the Select Committee on Standing Orders; and that Mr. Jenkins be added to the Committee.—(*Mr Ellis*) 1541

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without amendment 1541

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS.]—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment... ... 1541

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PETITIONS.

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland).—Petition for legislation; to lie upon the Table 1541

Licensed Premises Exclusion of Children.—5 Petitions for legislation; To lie upon the Table 1541

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—Petitions in favour; To lie upon the Table 1541

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions for alteration; To lie upon the Table 1542

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—5 Petitions in favour; To lie upon the Table 1542

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

East India (Bombay Political Department).—Return; To be printed. [No. 71]... 1542

Persia, No. 1 (1908).—Despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India in Council, relating to British Policy in Persia; to lie upon the Table 1542

China, No. 1 (1908).—Opium Question in China; to lie upon the Table ... 1542

Penal Servitude Acts (Conditional Licence).—To lie upon the Table ... 1542

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Council of the County of Anglesey; to lie upon the Table 1542

Railway, Etc., Bills.—Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and Provisional Orders of Session, 1908 relating to Railways, Canals, Tramways, Harbours, and Tidal Waters, and the supply of Electricity, Gas, and Water; to lie upon the Table 1542

Public Offices Site (Dublin) Act, 1903.—Amount presented; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 72.] 1543

Colonial Report (Annual).—Report No. 555 (St. Vincent, Report for 1906–7); to lie upon the Table 1543

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Memorandum of the Board of Education on the Financial Proposals in connection with the Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill, 1908; to lie upon the Table 1543

East India (Ecclesiastical Charges).—Address for "Return of the Charges of Ecclesiastical Establishments in India for the year 1906–7" 1543

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Training of Secondary School Teachers 1543

Education Authorities and Provision of Meals 1544

Complaints against Increased Railway Rates 1544

Post Office Savings Bank 1545

Vessels struck off Effective List 1547

Lancaster County Magistrate 1547

Board of Education and the Charitable Trust Act in Wales 1548

Increase of Wages in Royal Dockyards 1550

Prices of English, American and Canadian Beef 1550

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Foreign Meat 1550
Publication of Annual Report of the Board of Agriculture 1551
Licensing Compensation—Ante-1869 Beerhouses 1551
Revenue from duties on Alcohol 1552
Applications for Labourers Cottages at Strabane 1552
Appointments of Irish Magistrates... 1553

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Stoker Ratings of the Fleet... 1553
Policing of the Persian Gulf 1553
Privileges of Retiring Volunteers 1554
Advisory Council on Attestation 1555
Payment of Military Pensions 1555
Army Horses... 1556
Treatment of Invalided Soldiers 1556
British Cavalry Establishment 1557
Behar Disturbances—The Bloomfield Judgment 1558
The Rawal Pindi Prosecutions 1558
Sleeping Sickness in Uganda 1560
Norwegian Steam Trawlers... 1560
Bagdad Railway 1560
Piracy in the Persian Gulf 1561
Egyptian Provincial Councils 1561
Miners Nystagmus—Case of Ralph Harrison 1562
Coal Statistics 1563
Case of Dorothy Downing 1563
Unemployment in Canada 1565
Weighing of Coal Trucks at Keighley and Morecambe 1567
Labour on the Donegal Railway 1567
Procedure under the Trade Marks Act, 1905 1568
Employment in the Belfast Linen Trade 1568
Vaccination Law 1571
Incidence of Rating on Land 1571
Incidence of Rating on Personal and Real Property 1572
Danger of Glanders—Rotterdam Old Horse Trade 1572
Overcrowding of Poplar Workhouse 1573
La Plata Cattle Trade 1574
Liability for Maintenance of Parents 1574
Hackney Postal District 1575
Post Office Circular on the Hobhouse Revision 1576
School Building Grants 1576
School Building in Wales 1577
Board of Agriculture Offices 1577
Boy Clerks in the Civil Service 1578
Budget and the Stamp Duties 1579

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The Budget 1579
Royal Gardens at Kew 1579
Cattle Disease—Imports of Foreign Fodder 1580
Norwegian Steam Trawlers at Grimsby 1582
Scottish Education Bill 1583
Sale of Diseased Meat at Hamilton... 1584
Small Holdings in Scotland 1585
Land Purchase in County Donegal... 1585
Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants in Donegal 1586
Ballingeary Estate, County Cork 1586
Rule as the Quotations from Official Documents 1587
Strabane Church Lotteries 1587
Cheque Signatures in Irish 1588
Irish Mail Subsidies 1589
Gun Licences in Ireland 1591

Message from the Lords.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law with respect to the Assessment of Damages under the Fatal Accidents Acts." [Fatal Accidents (Damages) (No. 2) Bills [Lords]] 1591

NEW BILLS.

Justices of the Peace Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 113]... 1592

Spurious Sports Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed [Bill 114] 1592

Clerks of the Peace and County Councils Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 115] 1592

Housing of the Working Classes Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 116] 1592

Purity of Milk Supplies (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 23rd March, and to be printed. [Bill 117] 1592

Divorce Law Amendment (No. 2) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 118] 1592

Coal Mines (Eight Hours for Winding Enginemen) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 10th March, and to be printed. [Bill 119] ... 1593

Monastic and Conventual Institutions Bill.
Mr. T. L. Corbett (Down, N.) 1594

Motion made, and Question put, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to appoint Commissioners to inquire as to the need for the inspection of Monastic and Conventual Institutions."—(*Mr. T. L. Corbett.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 101; Noes, 151. (Division List No. 22.)

Small Landholders (Scotland) [Salaries, etc.]—Resolution reported: "That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present Session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, it is expedient to authorise—(i.) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of the salaries of the chairman and of each of the other members of the Land Court; (ii.) the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of:

(a) The salaries and remuneration of the Agricultural Commissioners and other persons appointed or employed by them and by the Land Court, and the expenses incurred by the Land Court and the Agricultural Commissioners in the execution of their duties; (b) an annual sum not exceeding £85,000 for the use of the Agricultural Commissioners; (c) compensation in certain cases to members and officers of the Crofter's Commission."
Resolution agreed to 1595

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1—

Mr. A J. Balfour (City of London) 1597
The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 1608
Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 1615
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 1617
Mr. A. Dewar (Edinburgh, S.) 1624
Mr. A. J. Balfour 1631
Lord Willoughby de Eresby 1635
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) 1639
Mr. Cochrane (Ayrshire, N.) 1643
The Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Ure, Linlithgowshire) 1648

Question put, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided: Ayes 350; Noes, 95. Division List. No. 23.)

And, it being after a quarter before Eight of the clock, the Chairman proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question put, "That Clauses 2 to 33, inclusive, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided: Ayes, 352; Noes, 96. (Division List No. 24.)

Whereupon the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to report the Bill to the House, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to put the Question. "That the Bill be now read the third time," pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

The House divided:—Ayes, 347; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 25.)

King's Consent signified.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

MACEDONIA.

Mr. G. A. Hardy (Suffolk, Stowmarket) 1663
Mr. Gooch (Bath) 1669

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House regrets the failure of the reforms which have been introduced for the amelioration of the condition of Macedonia, and urges the Government to press for the establishment of executive control by an authority responsible to the Powers.—(*Mr. George Hardy.*)

Earl Percy (Kensington, S.) 1677
Mr. Masterman (West Ham, N.) 1685

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick)... ... 1692

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) ... 1708

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.—Motion made, and Question "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for an additional provision in the London County Council (Tramways and Improvments) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Thames River Steamboat Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Dover Graving Docks Bill; and the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill ought to be dispensed with,

And that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Malvern Hills Bill [H.L.] ought not to be dispensed with.

Read ond agreed to ... 1702

Croydon and Southern District Tramways Bill.—[H.L]. Presented, and read 1ª. ... 1709

West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill.—[H.L]. Presented, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners. ... 1709

Swansea Valley Gas Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Crystal Palace Company Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.] Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills, viz.: E. Westmorland, E. Graham (*D. Montrose*), E. Cranbrook, V. Hood, L. Sanderson (chairman); agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday, the 10th of March, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills ... 1709

Transfer of Training Colleges Scotland Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to ... 1710

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with amendments... ... 1710

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

France No. 1 (1908).—Report upon the French Colonies ... 1710

Education (Scotland).—Minute providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant.

Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie on the Table ... 1710

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National Debt Annuities.—Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table... 1710

Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.—Brought from the Commons. Read 1^{a}; to be printed: and to be read 2^{a} on Tuesday, the 10th of March next. (No. 22)... 1711

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.

Lord Curzon of Kedleston 1711
The Lord President of the Council (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1713
Lord Curzon of Kedleston 1715
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) ... 1715

INDIA—NORTH-WEST FRONTIER POLICY.

Lord Curzon of Kedleston 1715
The Secretary of State tor the Colonies (*The Earl of Elgin*) 1727

House adjourned at a Quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 26, FEBRUARY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Manchester Corporation Bill (BY ORDER). Read a second time and committed 1732

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time... 1732

Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill.—Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time... 1732

PETITIONS.

Congo Free State.—Petition for protection of the Native Races; to lie upon the Table 1732

Licensed Premises Exclusion of Children.—5 petitions for legislation; To lie upon the Table 1733

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—7 petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1733

Woman's Enfranchisement Bill.—Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1733

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Aliens (Naturalisation).—Return presented; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 72] 1733

France (No. 1, 1908).—Report upon the French Colonies; to lie upon the Table 1733

Education (Scotland).—Minute providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant; to lie upon the table 1733

National Debt Annuities.—Account presented of the Gross Amount of all Bank Annuities; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 73] ... 1733

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Irish Land Commission (Account); to be printed. [No. 74]... 1734

Drunkenness (Ireland).—Return ordered, "Giving the number of Arrests for Drunkenness within the Metropolitan Police District of Dublin and the Cities Belfast, Cork, Limerick and Waterford 1734

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Life and Cost of Maintenance of Battleships 1734
Sale of the Phibbs and M'Alpine Robertson Estates, County Mayo 1735
Accidents Compensation Scheme in Dockyards—Time for Consideration ... 1735
Specific Gravity of Beer 1736
The Imperial Exchequer and Cost of Scottish Valuation 1736
Scottish Councils and the Government's Scottish Land Legislation 1736
Irish Land Strike—Losses on Flotation 1737
Income-Tax—Claims for Reduced Rate 1737
Inspection of Irish Schools 1738
Religious Persuasion of Royal Irish Constabulary 1738
American Import Duties on Samples and Works of Art 1739
Elementary Education Loan Charges 1739
Admiralty Steam Coal Contracts 1740
North Devon Coastguard Service 1740
Local Authorities and Loans under Licensing Act, 1904 1740
Wimbledon Tithe Rent Redemption 1741
Licensing Sessions—Justices who are Railway Shareholders 1743
Waggons for the Territorial Army 1743
Army Pension of J. O'Connor of Gorton 1744
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QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Mechanician Experiments 1745
Mechanicians in the Navy 1745
Navy Estimates 1745
Native Affairs Commission 1745
Unicameral Legislatures 1746
Argentina and the Falkland Archipelago 1747
Macedonian Reform 1747
Drunkenness in London 1747
The Whisky Commission 1748
Foot-and Mouth Disease—Imports of Foreign Fodder prohibited 1752
Milk-Blended Butter 1755
Douglas Crofter Commission 1757
Return of Agrarian Crimes 1757
Claims for Malicious Injuries 1758
Queen's County Extra Police Claim 1759
Traffic in Firearms in Ireland 1760
Longford Extra Police Charge 1760
Fuge Estate, Buttevant, County Cork 1761
Untenanted Doneraile (Cork) Lands 1761
Cork County Untenanted Lands 1762
Medical Inspection of Irish School Children 1763
Labourers' Cottages at Letterkenny 1763

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Fenwick Estate, County Donegal 1764
Mr. Persse of Woodville, Galway 1765
Clanricarde Estate 1771
Tuberculosis in Ireland 1772
Drainage of the Barrow 1773
City of Dublin Registers 1774
Winter Dairying in Ireland 1775
Steam Trawling on the Kerry Coast 1776
Irish Butter Competitions 1776
The Zakka Khel Expedition 1777
Business of the House 1778

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.—First Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. 1778

NEW BILLS.

Municipal Elections Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 120.] 1779

Restraint of Trades (Shops) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 121.] 1779

Public Libraries Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 122] 1779

Dogs (Injuries to Persons) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 123.] 1779

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT.

Mr. Maclean (Bath) 1779

Bill presented and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 124.]

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.—Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:—

Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1781

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, to leave out the words 'each county and burgh,' and insert the words 'the county of Lanarkshire and burgh of Glasgow.'"—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'each' stand part of the clause."

Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 1783
Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 1791
Mr. Wood (Glasgow, St. Rollox) 1795
Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 1802
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1804
Mr. Dundas White (Dumbartonshire) 1807
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W. 1811
Mr. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) 1816
Mr. McCrae (Edinburgh, E.) 1819
Sir E. Boyle (Taunton) 1820

Mr. Walsh (*Lancashire, Ince*) 1822
The Lord Advocate (*Mr. Thomas Shaw, Hawick Burghs*) 1823
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 1838
Mr. Chiozza Money (*Paddington, N.*) 1833
Mr. Remnant (*Finsbury, Holborn*) 1834

And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, the Chairman proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question, "That the word 'each' stand part of the Clause," put, and agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

Whereupon the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to report the Bill to the House, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Whereupon Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER proceeded to put the Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time," pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

The House divided:—Ayes, 347; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 26.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

CONGO FREE STATE.

Mr. Leif Jones (*Westmoreland, Appleby*) 1839
Sir John Kennaway (*Devonshire, Honiton*) 1849

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House being convinced that the present system of administration on the Congo is destructive of the personal liberty and economic rights of the native population and of the freedom of commercial intercourse with the outer world, as guaranteed by the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884 and the Berlin Act of 1885, asks the Government to do all in its power to secure that a fundamental alteration of the system shall be affected by any transfer of control of the State from the present Sovereign to any other authority; and, failing such transfer within a reasonable time, assures the Government of its hearty support in the measures it may be necessary to take, either alone or in conjuction with the other signatories of the Berlin Act, in order to secure the effective carrying out of its provisions."—(*Mr. Leif Jones.*)

Sir George White (*Norfolk, N.W.*) 1853
Sir H. Norman (*Wolverhampton, S.*) 1857
Mr. George Roberts (*Norwich*) 1861
Mr. Gwynn (*Galway*) 1865
Sir Francis Channing (*Northamptonshire, E.*) 1867
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick*) 1870
Earl Percy (*Kensington, S.*) 1881
Sir Charles Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 1882

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved "That this House being convinced that the present system of administration on the Congo is destructive of the personal liberty and economic rights of the native population and of the freedom of commercial intercourse with the outer world, as guaranteed by the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884 and the Berlin Act of 1885, asks the Government to do all in its power to secure that a fundamental alteration of the system shall be effected by any transfer of control of the State from the present Sovereing to any other authority; and

failing such transfer within a reasonable time, assures the Government of its hearty support in the measures it may be necessary to take, either alone or in conjunction with the other signatories of the Berlin Act, in order to ensure the effective carrying out of its provisions."—(*Mr. Leif Jones.*)

Dog Protection Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 1883

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Mooney (*Newry*) 1883

Mr. T. L. CORBETT rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put"; but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

And it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

Tobacco Growing (Scotland) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee 1884

HOPS.—Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the past and present condition of the Hop Industry, and to report thereon.

Committee accordingly nominated of—Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Barker, Sir William Collins, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Gretton, Mr. Mallet, Mr. Napier, Mr. Rowlands, Mr. Edward Strauss, Mr. Verney, and Mr. Patrick White.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, Papers, and records.

Ordered, that three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*) 1884

Adjourned at seven mintes after Eleven o'clock.

END OF TABLE OE CONTENTS TO VOL. CLXXXIV.

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

An Astrisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 12th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Norwich Union Fire Assurance Society Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [H.L.] Read 2ª.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TREATY SERIES, No. 4 (1908).

Treaty between the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, and Russia, respecting the independence and territorial integrity of Norway; signed at Christiania, 2nd November, 1907. Ratification deposited at Christiania, 6th February, 1908). Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons—That the Post Office Site (Glasgow) Order ought to be introduced in Parliament as a Public Bill; That the provisions of the Leith Burgh Order; the North Burgh Extension, etc., Order; the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, etc.) Order; and the Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Order, are of such a character that they ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order; that, save as aforesaid, the Draft Provisional Orders be allowed to proceed, subject to such recommendations as may hereafter be made with respect to the several Orders.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853-1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Daniel Condron under the provisions of the Penal Servitude Acts, 1853 to 1891, to which are annexed conditions other than those contained in Schedule A. of the Penal Servitude Act, 1864.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SMALL HOLDINGS IN BERKSHIRE.

*VISCOUNT HILL rose to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he had any information as to the existence of the North Berks Small Holdings and Allotments Society; whether this Society were offering land to the public for small holdings; and whether the land so offered belonged to the Duchy of Cornwall.

The noble Viscount said: My Lords, the Question which stands in my name on the Paper has reference to a farm known as Church Farm, on the Duchy of Cornwall estates, and upon which an article appeared in *The Times* of 17th January. It appears, from information I have been able to obtain, and also from the statement in *The Times*, that Mr. Strauss, M.P., applied, on behalf of the North Berks Small Holdings and Allotments Society, for a lease of practically the whole of the farm—some 400 acres—for small holdings. If this is the case, your Lordships will see that Mr. Strauss has entirely ignored the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of last year, and it is upon this information that I desire to call the attention of the noble Earl to the grave injustice that would arise out of such proceedings.

The Act to which I have referred distinctly lays down that the local authority are to draw up a scheme, and, if they fail, the Board of Agriculture are to do so, and to present the scheme to the local authority; and, if the local authority fail to carry out the suggested scheme, the Board of Agriculture have then the power to carry it out themselves. It is further laid down in the Act that local authorities, as well as the Board of Agriculture, have power to hand over land that they have purchased for small holdings to other associations, but only provided that the constitution and rules of the associations are approved by the local authority. All this has been ignored by Mr. Strauss, and the news of this transaction has created a great deal of disturbance among agricultural labourers and farmers. That being so, I think it is only the duty of any Member of your Lordships' House interested in the Small Holdings Act to draw the attention of the President of the Board of Agriculture to it.

I feel confident that the noble Earl does not desire the Act to be ignored. On the other hand, if the statement which has appeared in *The Times* is not true, or is exaggerated, then I think the noble Earl should be given an opportunity of explaining the case fully and satisfactorily, in order to remove any erroneous impression already existing in the neighbourhood of the Duchy of Cornwall and prevent its spreading to other agricultural districts. A similar Question was asked in another place, to which Mr. Runciman gave a fairly satisfactory Answer, but whether it was an official Answer or not I am not in a position to state. As the article which appeared in *The Times* has been reprinted in various local papers, I maintain that it is only fair to the whole of the agricultural community that the matter should be satisfactorily explained, to enable the working of the Small Holdings Act being successfully carried through without any friction.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, the noble Viscount has asked me whether I have any information as to the existence of the North Berks Small Holdings and Allotments Society. I have made inquiries, and I find that there is a society under that name, and it is in course of being registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1893. It is affiliated to the Agricultural Organisation Society—a well-known society, among whose principal promoters are Mr. Yerburgh, ex-M.P., the Hon. Thomas Brassey, Colonel Long, M.P., Mr. F. D. Acland, M.P., and Mr. Noel Buxton. Promises, I am informed, have been already received to take up between 1,500 and 2,000 shares in this society, the object being to form a sort of parent society in North Berks, with branches in the different parishes, and it is to be run very much on the same lines as the Lincolnshire and the Norfolk Small Holdings Societies, which have done much good work, and with both of which I happen, myself, to be personally connected.

I am next asked whether this society is offering land to the public for small holdings. I am informed that there is a considerable amount of land already applied for in North Berks. The matter has not come officially before me, and I am, therefore, unable to state the exact amount. But I believe I am correct in saying that around Abingdon, a small Berkshire town of about 7,000 inhabitants, there is a demand for 500 or 600 acres of land. Perhaps I might say here that in 1905 or 1906 about 100 men had small holdings and allotments round the town, but the land was sold, I believe to a building speculator, and the tenants turned off, and at the present moment a good many of them are without land at all. Land was offered to these men by the local authority, but as the land so offered was the sewage farm, they, not unnaturally, I think, declined it. I am informed that these men have lost heart in the business, and that some of them, at any rate, are not disposed to try a venture again after having been turned out of their old holdings. I understand that the applicants in this case have a certain amount of money, and that the society is able to guarantee a year's rent in addition to stocking the holdings, independently of the money the men themselves have.

There must be a good demand for land in that neighbourhood. In the Faringdon district there is a farm belonging to Oriel College, Oxford, the tenant of which went bankrupt and for which there are already forty-one applications, the forty-first application being from the North Berks Small Holdings and Allotments Society. This society has, I understand, offered an increased rent, and also guarantee the rent in advance, so as, if possible, to out-distance their competitors and get the farm. But, as I have said, the registration of the society is not complete, the agricultural organisation which I mentioned having the matter in hand. Therefore the Answer to the second Question of the noble Viscount is that the society are not offering land to the public for small holdings, for the simple reason that they have at present no land to offer.

The noble Viscount mentioned a farm belong to the Duchy of Cornwall, and referred to some reports in *The Times* and elsewhere, about which he asked me a Question. I think the House will agree that it is not my business to correct what appears in the newspapers, and on the subject of the farm belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall I can only refer to Mr. Runciman's reply in the other House, that the Duchy has not given, and never had any intention to give, notice to quit to the tenants of the farm at Shipton, near Abingdon. I am informed that, while the Duchy of Cornwall decline to let land to individuals or to associations for small holdings, they are perfectly ready and willing to let land for this purpose to local authorities. They are anxious to meet in every fair way the demand for land, and I believe that in days gone by the Duchy of Cornwall were very generous in this matter, and that they have a considerable number of allotments and small holdings on this large estate.

I do not quite understand what the noble Viscount meant when he said that Mr. Strauss had ignored the Small Holdings Act. This association apparently has been anxious to get land by mutual consent from individual landlords, and they may, or may not, have approached the Duchy of Cornwall in that way. But it seems to me that, instead of ignoring the recent Act, the members of this association are doing their best to assist its operation. I think the House will agree that these associations are of great value, not only to their members but to the local authorities, to the landlords, and to the would-be small holders themselves; and I would remind the noble Viscount that specific powers were given, under Section 9 of the Act of last year, to enable local authorities to let land to such associations. That was only carrying out the idea of the Committee presided over by the Earl of Onslow. Five hundred acres of Crown lands have already been let to the Lincolnshire Small Holdings Association. These associations must afford considerable relief to the county councils in the detailed trouble and labour of meeting the enormous demands for small holdings. And here, perhaps, I may be permitted to express my gratitude to the county councils for the generous, practical, and workmanlike way in which they have met the extra work placed on them by the Small Holdings Act. In twenty-six counties within six weeks 4,700 applications were made for 87,000 acres of land, which represents 136 square miles of country, equivalent to a belt about one mile wide extending rather further than from London to Bristol. Under these circumstances the work of the county councils must be very heavy. They are tackling the question in a way deserving of our best thanks, and by fostering these associations in every way in our power we hope to save the county councils a large amount of the detail work. I hope this Answer will satisfy the noble Viscount, but if he requires any further information regarding this society I shall be only too pleased to supply it.

MANNING OF THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

Lord BRASSEY rose to call attention to the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Trade on the supply and training of British seamen for the mercantile marine. The noble Lord said: My Lords, in calling attention briefly to the training of seamen, I need not insist on the importance of the subject. Your Lordships are familiar with those imposing statistics of tonnage on which Presidents of the Board of Trade delight to dwell. We are justly proud of the British mercantile marine. But when we turn from the number and tonnage of our ships to manning, there is less cause for satisfaction. We are unduly dependent on foreigners. Under the restrictions imposed by the navigation laws, a considerable percentage of foreigners was allowed. Since the completion of the Suez Canal, Asiatics have been introduced in large numbers into our merchant service. We need them. In the heats experienced on the Red Sea route Europeans must in time deteriorate. To exclude, or even to diminish, the employment of Asiatics is not desirable. It has been recommended that a reserve for the Navy should be raised in the ports of India. The Committee on Manning, over which Lord St. Helier presided, were favourably impressed with the manly character of the native witnesses who appeared before them, and they reported that Lascars were fully competent for the naval service as stokers and firemen.

Turning to the trades for which British seamen are suitable, foreigners have always been employed to some extent, and until quite recent years in an ever-increasing proportion. There are ships sailing under the British flag manned before the mast almost entirely by foreigners. Such a state of things must be viewed with regret. It has given rise to apprehension that the characteristics of the British as a sea-going race are deteriorating. Successive Governments have appointed Departmental Committees to suggest remedies. In 1894 the manning of merchant ships was considered by a Committee, with Sir Edward Reed as chairman. His colleagues included Mr. Forwood, Secretary to the Admiralty, and several leading shipowners and commanders of the mercantile marine. In their Report the Committee dwelt at length on the disadvantageous conditions of the seaman's calling as compared with those of employments on shore. With wages it is not possible for Governments directly to deal. The recommendations as to training, though strongly urged, have been too long neglected.

The Committee advocated the establishment of training-ships. They pointed out that the Legislature had provided liberally for the promotion of technical education, and that no branch could be more directly profitable to the country than the preparation of youths for the sea service. A few years later the subject of manning was once more referred to the Departmental Committee appointed in 1902, with the late Lord St. Helier as chairman. Effect has since been given to the recommendations of the Committee as to cooking, inspection of food, and the exclusion from British ships of foreigners whose knowledge of our language is not sufficient. But nothing has been done in aid of training-ships and the training of boys on merchant vessels.

And now I come to the Report of the Departmental Committee of which Mr. Hudson Kearley, Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Trade, was chairman. The Committee had before them previous unsuccessful efforts. The boy sailor scheme was connected with the light dues. It gave less to long voyage ships than to vessels in the coasting trades, and the former are the best schools for training. Later the Admiralty proposed a plan, but that scheme was a failure because the grants were insufficient. Mr. Kearley's Committee, having the experience of past failures before them, were more liberal. They proposed a capitation of £20, under suitable conditions, for each boy, not exceeding 5,000, annually trained for the sea service. The Committee repeat and emphasise the arguments used by Sir Edward Reed's Committee as to the duty of a maritime State to train boys to the sea, as a vitally important branch of technical instruction. An expenditure of £100,000 a year on training is, in my opinion, a small item in the vast sums we spend on education.

I turn to methods of training. For those serving as firemen there can be no training so practical as that to be obtained in the stokehold of a well-manned steamer. Discipline can best be taught in a well-ordered school-ship, of which the "Exmouth"—the vessel maintained by the Metropolitan Asylums Board—is an admirable example. For officers and seamen to be employed in deck duties and in handling canvas, sailing ships are the best schools. Mr. Kearley's Committee refer with special commendation to the "Port Jackson," a sailing ship which recently took out a hundred boys from the "Warspite" on a ten months voyage to Australia and back. The arrangements for instruction were singularly efficient. At the end of the cruise no difficulty was experienced in finding good employment for all the boys at sea, thus proving that good training supplies a want. We must view with regret the fact that sailing ships are disappearing under the British flag. Here we may learn a lesson from Germany. By far the finest sailing ships of the present day are those in the nitrate trade, under the German flag. They go out in ballast round the Horn in from sixty to seventy days, and they return, carrying cargoes of 6,500 tons of nitrate, in from seventy to eighty days. It would be well if a few ships such as those now sailing from Hamburg were running under the British flag to Australia. They would be a valuable nursery for British seamen.

In conclusion, the ships in which the boys would be trained before the mast would be suitable for the training of the young officers of the Naval Reserve. The names of the officers of the Reserve fill twenty pages in our Navy list. Is that Reserve effective, or a force on paper? If intended to be effective, provision should be made for training. For officers entered for the permanent Navy no expense is spared. Nothing, however, has been done for the Reserve; yet at a small cost much might be accomplished. The cause which I have endeavoured to plead has fewer friends than might be wished. Attention at the Admiralty is naturally centred in the permanent force, and reserves recruited from the permanent force. Leading shipowners have no difficulty in manning their ships; many are content to rely on foreigners, who serve them cheaply. The recommendations of the Committees to which I have referred rest mainly on considerations of a national character, and these will, I know, have weight with your Lordships, and, I trust, with the public. For without the support of public opinion it is vain to appeal to the Treasury.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, the question raised by my noble friend is one of deep interest in this country, and I suppose there is nobody more competent to speak upon it than the noble Lord, who from his earliest days has derived his pleasures from the sea, and has done a great deal to improve the lot of the seafaring community as a whole. The noble Lord virtually wishes me to say what the Government propose to do as regards the recommendations of the Kearley Committee which reported last August.

That Committee made various propositions and considered various proposals. One of the first proposals they considered was the compelling of every ship to carry boys, but they abandoned that standpoint altogether, and I think your Lordships will agree, quite justly. Then they discussed the question whether or not capitation grants should be given to shipowners. Various arguments were adduced against this course, and I think one of the strongest was that of the Admiralty, who said they would derive no benefit whatever under such a scheme, and that it would not affect the Navy materially one way or the other, as they were always able to get as many boys for the Navy as they wanted. The Committee eventually decided that the best course would be to give grants to certain training ships, and they argued—I think very justly—that it would be a great national advantage to have boys who were going to adopt a seafaring career better trained. Many of the shipowners who gave evidence used an argument which I think is a very true one—namely, that if they took boys they were of very little use to them for something like two years. They are not in the same position as boys on shore, for in the case of the latter the Government support technical schools, and a boy entering, say, the engineering trade would work at the shops during the day and take advantage in the evening of the technical instruction for which the country pays. Secondly, the shipowners say they have to bear the whole cost. There is no doubt that a boy who has served on a training ship is much more competent to take his place among a crew than a boy brought straight from the country. Several shipowners, however, said they would much rather take a boy direct from the country than one who had had experience on a training ship, but I cannot think that any of your Lordships would agree as to the wisdom of that.

There are one or two other points to which I should like to draw your Lordships' attention. It is our great hope that in the future we shall be able to reduce very materially the number of foreigners employed on board ship, but in this respect it must not be forgotten that this country has 50 per cent. of the whole carrying trade of the world; we have the largest fighting Navy and the largest fishing fleet in the world, and, with our population, I think it is impossible to hope that the whole of the British mercantile marine can be manned entirely by British subjects. However, I may say in this respect that the number of foreigners employed on British ships is gradually decreasing. I hope this state of things will continue, and I think the Merchant Shipping Act which I had the honour of presenting to your Lordships in 1906 will go a long way to effect this. Before that year seamen did not have the best of treatment, but we have now improved their food and accommodation, and I look forward to the future with great confidence in that respect.

Now to touch briefly on the recommendations of the Committee and their cost. The output of boys from these training ships would be about 5,000 per annum, and that, at £20 per year, would work out annually at £100,000; and if the Committee's recommendation is to be acted upon that sum of money will have to be found by the country. One great objection is that there is no way of determining that a boy, after we have paid this capitation grant for him, will remain permanently at sea. He may go to sea for two years and at the end of that time give up the calling, and we then derive no benefit from the amount expended on his training. I cannot give your Lordships a definite answer to-night as to whether or not we shall be able to find the money necessary for this proposal, but I may say that we all view the objects of the Report with great sympathy, and if it is possible to adopt the views expressed in it I am sure His Majesty's Government will do their best in that direction.

Since we met last session my noble friend who has raised this question to day has been honoured by being made Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. I feel sure that every one of your Lordships will agree that no more suitable appointment could possibly have been made, and I feel that I shall be voicing the opinion of noble Lords present when I express the hope that my noble friend will be spared for many years to enjoy the honour he has so well merited.

House adjourned at a quarter past Five o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 12th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order

63 has been complied with, viz.:—Swinton and Mexborough Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) Bill.—Read a second time and committed.

PETITIONS.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Petition from Kincardine-on Forth, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

GREEN'S NORTON POST OFFICE.

Petition from Green's Norton, for inquiry into the dismissal of the late sub-postmaster; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation; From Abercarn; Bakewell; Barton le Willows; Beverley (two); Bulmer; Castle Howard; Coneysthorpe; Easingwold (three); Gloucester; Husthwaite; London; Macclesfield; Scotswood; Strensall; Sutton on Hull; Theale; Whitehaven; and Wool hampton; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Petition in favour; From Ashbourne; Aston Manor; Daventry; Doncaster; East Ham; Hetton Downs (two); Hexham; King's Lynn; King's Norton; Lambeth; Lee; Lemington on Tyne; London; Lynton; Pendlebury (two); Rosegrove; Ryhope; Seven Kings; South Shields (two); and, Weston; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TREATY SERIES (No. 4, 1908).

Copy presented, of Treaty between the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, and Russia, respecting the Independence and Territorial Integrity of Norway. Signed at Christiania, 2nd November, 1907. Ratifications deposited at Christiania, 6th February, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of licence granted to Daniel Condron, to which are annexed conditions other than those contained in Schedule A of the Penal Servitude Act, 1864 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, that they are of opinion that the Post Office Site (Glasgow) Order ought to be introduced in Parliament as a Public Bill, and that the Leith Burgh Order, the Motherwell Burgh Extension, &c., Order, the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, &c.) Order, and the Wishaw Burgh Electricity, &c., Order, ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 48.]

CROWN JEWELS COMMISSION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Appendix to the Report of the Vice-Regal Commission appointed to investigate the circumstances of the loss of the Regalia of the Order of Saint Patrick, and to inquire whether Sir Arthur Vicars exercised due vigilance and proper care as the custodian thereof. Minutes of evidence [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (MONTHLY STATEMENTS).

Copy ordered, "of Statements for each Month of the year 1908 of the number of Paupers relieved in England and Wales (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 23, of Session 1907)."—(*Dr. Macnamara*).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Mr. Moss, of Widnes, and Vaccination Exemption.

SIR MAURICE LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the case of William Moss, of 84, Oakland Street, Widnes, who had a child born to him on the 16th September, 1907, which was registered on 30th September, 1907;

whether he is aware that when registering the birth of the child no form of declaration of conscientious objection to vaccination was handed to him, although registrars all over the country had been instructed to hand Form A., Part 2, to persons registering births in the case of all children born after 31st August, 1907; whether he is aware that Mr. Moss applied to the same registrar for a form on 6th January, 1908, and was refused on the ground that the forms had been called in, although in other similar cases registrars had issued to the applicant a duplicate vaccination schedule; whether he is aware that Mr. Moss applied to the local magistrates on the same date, and was refused exemption on the ground that he had no form, notwithstanding the fact that the Vaccination Act, 1907, permits any kind of declaration, printed, typed, or written, provided it is in the form set out in the Act; and whether he will give the Widnes vaccination officer instructions not to prosecute this man for the non-vaccination of his child, seeing that he has done all in his power to comply with the Act, but has been prevented partly through the action of the registrar and partly through the action of the local justices.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have made inquiry with regard to this matter. I find that the registrar acted in accordance with a strict interpretation of the instructions contained in a circular issued by the Registrar General, which applied to births registered on and after the 1st October. The Registrar General, however, regrets that the case was not referred to him for advice, as he would have instructed the registrar to give Mr. Moss a copy of Form A., Part 2, although in fact the birth was registered on the 30th September. The application made to the justices on 6th January, appears to have been one for a certificate of conscientious objection. Mr. Moss was informed by the clerk that the new Act was in force, and that it had abolished those certificates and substituted a declaration which one of the justices would take. He was also told that he could obtain a form of declaration from the registrar, but, in the circumstances, this was not the case. The Local Government Board do not give instructions as to whether prosecutions should or should not be instituted in particular cases, but, looking to all facts here, I do not suppose that proceedings would be taken against Mr. Moss for the non-vaccination of the child.

Beerhouses Contribution to Compensation Funds.

MR. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, what have the 31,942 beerhouses in existence on the 1st January, 1905, contributed to the compensation fund in the financial years 1905–6–7–8 respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*)

Amount of Compensation Fund Charges paid by Retailers of Beer and Cider and Wine in the years ended 31st March, 1906 and 1907, and in the ten months ending 31st January, 1908.

Period.	Beer and Cider.	Beer and Wine.
	£	£
Year ending 31st March, 1906 - - -	184,986	55,382
,, ,, 1907 - - -	176,221	52,972
Ten months ending 31st January, 1908 -	173,366	53,249
Total - - - -	534,573	161,603

The payments for the ten months to the 31st January represent practically the whole amount for the financial year.

Alleged Assaults by Police at Newtownforbes.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state who was responsible for the attack made on the Clonguish band at Newtonforbes, on Saturday 7th December, 1907; whether he is aware that the police, on this occasion, assaulted men, women, and children promiscuously, injuring several old women badly; and will he direct an inquiry to be made into the conduct of the official responsible on the occasion.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The police authorities inform me that no attack was made by the police on the Clonguish band on the occasion referred to. The bandsmen and their followers were most disorderly, and the police, in pursuance of their duty, caused them to move on and go to their band room. The occasion was two o'clock a.m. on Sunday, 8th December. The police committed no assaults, and no one—man, woman, or child—was injured.

Site of New Burial Ground at Lisnaskea.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that acute differences of opinion have arisen in the Lisnaskea rural district as to the suitability of a site selected by the council, which is alleged to be inconvenient of access and likely to be a cause of pollution to the Brookeboro waterworks; and will he suggest to the Local Government Board the propriety of holding a sworn inquiry and refusing to sanction any loan for the acquisition of the site if found unsuitable.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that the hon. Member is correct in stating that there are acute differences of opinion among the members of the rural district council, as to the suitability of the site proposed for the new burial ground. The Local Government Board would be prepared to hold an inquiry in the matter, if the council should require a loan to defray the cost. The rural district council have, however, definitely stated that they do not consider a loan necessary.

Liscannor Harbour Improvements.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in the year 1902 a free grant of £8,000 was allocated for the improvement of Liscannor harbour; that the Board of Works appointed Messrs. G. A. Watson and Company, Limited, contractors for the execution of the works; that, notwithstanding that the County Council of Clare are liable for a guarantee of 1½ per cent. for four years on the contract price, the Board of Works did not allow the county council to interfere in the plans, specifications, or contract for the works; that the contractors were allowed a period of two and a half years to complete their contract; and that by the contract four new berths were to be provided, the bed of the harbour deepened and rendered safe for vessels, the sea wall to be thoroughly pinned, and proper accommodation and landing-places provided for fishing boats; and whether, seeing that though the works should have been completed more than a year ago they are still only half completed, and consequently a considerable loss to the harbour dues will occur during the coming spring and summer by reason of the state of the harbour, he can state what steps the Board of Works are now taking to complete the matters necessary to make the harbour safe.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The facts are not precisely as stated in the Question. The grant in the case was £8,500. It was approved in 1904. Only two new berths were specified, and new accommodation for fishing was not mentioned. The work is more than half finished, everything being complete except the excavation. The Board of Works, who are, under the Marine Works Act, solely responsible for the design and execution of the works, have furnished me with the following information. It is the case that the date fixed for completion, 30th September, 1906, is more than a year past, and that a substantial part of the work remains unfinished. The reason is that the contractors failed, and their affairs went into the hands of a receiver, who has so far declined to complete the work. The Board are negotiating with a view to taking over the completion of the work themselves. The Board do not think that the dues of the harbour are much affected by its unfinished state. The contractors who have failed were the owners of the quarries which supplied almost all the trade, and the Board are informed that the quarries are closed. There would therefore be a small amount of dues in any case. There is little or no fishing. The contribution by the county council does not begin to be payable till the works are complete.

Irish Land—Relief of Former Occupiers Reinstated as Future Tenants.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in his intended legislation this session, he proposes to afford any relief to former occupiers restored to their holdings with the *status* of future tenants who are at present entirely excluded from the benefits of the Act of 1881.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This question will be fully considered in connection with the legislation which it is intended to introduce for the purpose of amending the Irish Land Acts. I cannot at present say anything more definite on the subject.

Illegitimate Children Born in Workhouses.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can say what number of females were delivered of illegitimate children in the workhouses or infirmaries in England and Wales during 1907; and if he can also say approximately how many of these were thus confined for the first time.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am unable to give the information indicated in the Question.

Local Taxation.

MR. BARNARD: To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the average amount of rates per head of the population in England and Wales collected in the years 1879–1899 and the last known year, respectively; and the grants in aid per head contributed from the Exchequer during the same years.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am not sure whether my hon. friend desires particulars as to each year between 1879 and 1899, but perhaps the following statement, which is complied from the summaries of the Local Taxation Returns (England and Wales) for the years 1903–4 and 1904–5, will answer his purpose. It shows the average amounts per head of estimated population of the public rates and Exchequer grants received by the local authorities of England and Wales in the year 1879–80, and in every fifth succeeding year to 1904–5, inclusive. Sums paid by the Board of Education directly to the managers of voluntary schools are not included.

Year. 1.	Public Rates. 2.	Exchequer Grants (including sums received from the Local Taxation Account). 3.
	£ s. d.	s. d.
1879–80 -	0 17 4	2 2
1884–5 -	0 19 1	2 8
1889–90 -	0 19 6	4 7
1894–5 -	1 2 6	6 0
1899–1900	1 5 7	7 8
1904–5 -	1 13 2	11 5

Births and Deaths in Scotland.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he can state what was the estimated excess of births over deaths in Scotland during the year 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The excess of births over deaths registered in Scotland in 1907 was 51,522.

Committee on Railway Accounts.

MR. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say how far advanced the Departmental Committee on Railway Accounts is, and when the Report will be issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I understand that the Departmental Committee on Railway Accounts and

Statistical Returns is still engaged in hearing evidence, and is not expected to report for some months.

Employment of Boy Clerks.

MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the remarks of the Secretary to the Civil Service Commission at the Boy Clerks' Friendly Society's meeting, held on 12th December, 1907, in which he deplored the policy of employing boy clerks on a large scale; and in view of the remarks of this official, can he say why large numbers are still being employed, of whom only a small proportion can gain permanent employment.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The remarks of the Secretary to the Civil Service Commission at the meeting in question had no official or authoritative character, and expressed no more than his personal opinion. The question of reducing the number of boy clerks is under consideration, but no decision has yet been arrived at.

Income Tax—Claims for Abatement on Earned Incomes.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the nature of the instructions prescribed to the surveyors of taxes in the matter of applications for abatement of 3d. in the pound; and if he can see his way to recommend some mitigation of the inquisitiveness of these agents, consistent with due protection of public revenue.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) It is the duty of surveyors of taxes to verify all claims for relief in respect of earned income and, inasmuch as the relief can only be granted upon proof that the total income of the applicant does not exceed £2,000 per annum, it is necessary for the surveyor to be furnished with full particulars before he is in a position to certify the claim. The Board of Inland Revenue are satisfied that their surveyors have limited themselves to such inquiries as are necessary for the protection of the Revenue.

Discharge of Michael Deegan, Munster Fusiliers.

MR. JOYCE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of Mary Deegan, of Annacotty, county Limerick, a widow of over seventy years of age and in feeble health, who claims to have her son discharged from the Army under the Widows Act, the said son, Michael Deegan, being a private in the Munster Fusiliers now in India, her claim being founded on the fact that her son is her only support, and that her claim for his discharge was conceded some time since, but for some reason which she cannot understand his discharge is not being proceeded with; and whether taking into account the position of this poor woman her claim will now be allowed and her son given back to her.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This man enlisted in September, 1905, and was sent to India last September. He is in receipt of service pay and could well afford to send money home to his mother. The mother applied in August, 1907, for his discharge, and the matter was referred to the general officer commanding concerned, who has full authority under the King's Regulations to deal with such cases, and with whose decision the Army Council does not propose to interfere. There is no such Act as the Widows Act.

Training of the Territorial Force.

CAPTAIN CLIVE (Herefordshire, Ross): To ask the Secretary of State for War under what circumstances men of the Territorial Force are liable for thirty days training under Section 15 (2) (a) of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The object of Sub-section (2) (a) of Section 15 is to enable a unit under exceptional circumstances to train for a longer period than that laid down in Sub-section (1). The sub-section follows the wording of Section 17 of the Militia Act, 1882, with the substitution of thirty days for fifty-six. The provision for such extension of training has been found to work well in practice, and the scientific branches of the Militia have frequently availed themselves of its advantages. It must be remembered that the proviso as to dispensing with individual attendances applies to this sub-section. Further, it can only be brought into operation by an Order in Council.

Increase in the Price of Flour.

Sir HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield Central): To ask the Prime Minister, if he is aware that the cost of flour in Sheffield, Leeds, and other large cities, has increased during the past year by from 8s. to 9s. per sack, inflicting thereby an increase of from 20 to 30 per cent. in the cost of the loaf baked at home, usual in Yorkshire; and what steps he has taken, is taking, or, in view of the anticipated further rise, proposes to take to develop the sources of supply of wheat and flour in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere under the flag, so as to free this prime necessary of life from the manipulations of foreigners to the detriment of our own people.

(*Answered by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*) The hon. and gallant Member appears to regard me as being in some way responsible for the failure of the harvest to which the increase in the price of flour is due. I know of no method of counteracting such failure; nor do I understand how the imposition of a duty on foreign corn would bring relief to those who are suffering from the high price of flour.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Volunteer Long Service Medal.

Mr. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether those who joined the new Territorial Army, and had previously been members of the Volunteer Force, would be eligible for the long service medal on the same basis as if they had continued service in the Volunteer Force.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): The matter is under consideration, and it is hoped will be settled shortly.

Volunteer Officers' Grant.

Mr. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an officer who has not yet completed his three years service in the Volunteer Force is entitled to resign his commission on 31st March (commencement of the new Army Scheme), without forfeiting the grant of £20 made to him when he joined.

Mr. HALDANE: An officer in the Volunteer Force retiring under the circumstances stated in the Question will not forfeit the outfit allowance of £20.

Indian Decentralization Commission.

Mr. SMEATON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether the evidence of the officials of the Government of India before the Decentralisation Commission is to be taken in camerâ; if so, for what reason, seeing that the evidence of the officials of the local governments has been taken in public; and whether this change of method has received his sanction.

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Morley, Montrose Burghs): I am aware that a part of the evidence to be taken by the Decentralisation Committee will be given in private, being of a confidential nature. This has been arranged between the Chairman of the Commission and the Government of India, and I see no reason for objecting, if indeed, I have any power.

Flogging of Zulus.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has any official information showing that unresisting Zulus have been shot and flogged since Dinizulu's arrest; and if he will inquire into the matter at once.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.): Five natives were tried and sentenced to be flogged, as I stated in reply to a Question by the hon. Member for Nottingham East on Thursday last. The official information received shows that two natives or perhaps three were shot when escaping from the police, but the account of the occurrence also states that by the side of each of the two dead bodies were found magazine rifles with the magazines charged and the cut-offs open. The apparent discrepancy will be inquired into.

Mr. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) asked whether it was not a fact that men were flogged to obtain evidence, and whether, in view of the professions made at the time of the South African war in regard to Boer cruelty, the Government would not take steps in this matter.

MR. CHURCHILL said he had given all the information he had received.

MR. HUGH LAW asked whether there was any indication of the motives for flogging.

MR. CHURCHILL: No; but it is strongly denied by the Natal Government that it was done for the purpose of extracting evidence.

*MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give me the names of the people who ordered and were present at the flogging?

MR. CHURCHILL: I think I should like to have an opportunity of considering that.

*MR. BELLOC: If you prefer to conceal it, do so.

MR. CHURCHILL: I think the House will admit that I do endeavour to obtain information that is desired.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked as to the number of lashes inflicted.

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to say careful inquiry was being made, but there was no evidence of more than the ordinary amount of flogging during military operations.

Martial Law in Natal.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government has any further information to give the House as to how much longer martial law is to be allowed to prevail in certain districts in Natal.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): May I also ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the proclamation of martial law in Natal is still in force; whether there is any state of war in that Colony; whether the ordinary criminal courts of the Colony are open for the trial of offenders; and whether he will press upon the Government of the Colony that the proclamation, if still in force, should be at once withdrawn, and that unless this is done His Majesty's Government may be constrained to disallow the Act of Indemnity.

MR. CHURCHILL: Martial law, so far as I am aware, remains in force in Zululand despite the view of the Governor and the Secretary of State that it is not required. No date has yet been fixed for its withdrawal. The military forces which were called out at the time of the proclamation of martial law have been demobilised and the ordinary courts are open. Lord Elgin's opinion upon this question was made quite clear in his telegram of 27th December, published in the last Blue-Book, and my noble friend does not at present desire to make any further observations upon it. His Majesty's Government, as the Prime Minister stated, prefer not to discuss at this juncture so serious a step as that of advising His Majesty to signify disallowance of an Act of Indemnity.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked if the Governor was not also commander-in-chief in the Colony, and being technically in command of the Imperial forces would it not be open for him to say that they shall not be used in this devil's work.

MR. CHURCHILL'S reply was inaudible.

Dinizulu.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the circumstances under which Mr. Jellicoe has refused to continue the defence of Dinizulu; and whether obstacles were placed in Mr. Jellicoe's way in preparing his defence.

The following Questions on the same subject also appeared on the paper.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any information if, before declining to proceed as counsel for Dinizulu, Mr. Jellicoe presented to the Governor a written protest regarding the proceedings; and whether His Majesty's Government will lay the protest upon the Table of the House, together with further Papers in continuation of Cd. 3888.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if, since the withdrawal of Mr. Jellicoe, His Majesty's Government has taken any steps to secure a fair trial for Dinizulu.

Mr. T. DAVIES (Fulham): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the fact that the learned counsel who went out to Natal specially to defend Dinizulu has retired from the case; and can he inform the House of the reason for his retirement.

Mr. CHURCHILL: With the permission of the House and for convenience I will answer all the Questions upon this subject together. I have no information as to the circumstances which led to Mr. Jellicoe's retirement from the conduct of Dinizulu's defence except that contained in the public Press. I have, of course, read Mr. Jellicoe's statement, and it will receive close attention from the Secretary of State. But the Governor of Natal, in whose judgment His Majesty's Government have great confidence, is at present in Zululand upon a tour of personal inspection to which importance is attached, and in the absence of a full report from him it would not be wise to form an opinion upon Mr. Jellicoe's allegations. The fact, however, that Mr. Jellicoe has retired from the case left His Majesty's Government in some doubt as to the precise means by which full legal assistance was to be secured to Dinizulu, and a telegram was on Monday sent to the Governor upon that point. I shall hope to be able to give the House more information next week.

Budget Taxation.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the expediency of establishing a graduated receipt stamp.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): As I informed my hon. friend last Monday, all suggestions on the subject of taxation receive my most careful consideration.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman exclude his sympathy in regard to this particular proposal?

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir; I am sympathetic towards any new source of taxation which would increase the revenue.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman favour me with a definition of official sympathy?

[No Answer was returned.]

British Investments Abroad.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he is aware that, according to the Fiftieth Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, there was an increase in 1905–6 over the preceding year of no less than £7,837,156 in the profits derived from investments abroad; and whether he will consider the desirability of so defending the productive industries of the United Kingdom as to check the expulsion of British capital abroad, in the interests of labour and employment in this country.

Mr. ASQUITH: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. I have studied the figures referred to, which are very remarkable, with great interest. A large part of the increase probably represents greater productivity of existing investments, and it may also to some extent be due to a closer collection of income-tax on foreign investments generally. In so far as it represents income on British capital newly invested abroad, I by no means follow the hon. Member in regarding such capital as having been "expelled" from the United Kingdom to the detriment of labour and employment here, seeing that it in fact represents the proceeds of the sale of British products in foreign and Colonial markets: but the general question is too wide to argue exhaustively in a Parliamentary Answer.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON: According to this Report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, are not the figures given as receipts from investments abroad?

Mr. ASQUITH: Investments abroad take very largely the form of products of British industry exported abroad.

Committals to Prison.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will say how many persons were committed to prison in England and Wales during 1907 in default of payment of a fine imposed for breach of a bye-law or a similar regulation; and how many such persons were boys and girls under the age of sixteen.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): The numbers were 8,521 males and 2,711 females. Of these 159 males and two females were under the age of sixteen.

Punishments in Reformatories.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state what punishments other than corporal punishment, are inflicted in reformatories, industrial schools, and truant schools respectively.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The punishments in question are practically the same in the three classes of schools and consist of:—(*a*) Forfeiture of rewards and privileges, or loss of rank previously obtained by good conduct; (*b*) Dietary punishment; (*c*) Confinement for a limited time in a light room or a light cell. There are, of course, other ways of reproving children which a judicious superintendent may order, for example, extra drill or less pleasant though necessary work.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will state what was the number of cases of corporal punishment in reformatories, industrial schools, and truant schools, respectively, during 1907; in how many cases the child was a girl; in how many cases the child was under eight; and whether he will also state the kind of corporal punishment permitted, and the person by whom it may be ordered.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The punishment of whipping can be inflicted with the birch rod, by the superintendent, or, in some cases, by the head teacher; and there may be punishment on the palm of the hand, with the school cane, or, in Scotland, with a leather tawse. For many years the rules sanctioned for girls' schools have not authorised the infliction of corporal punishment; and even in old-established schools, such punishment is only inflicted in exceptional cases as a last resort, after due consideration by the managers. Children under eight years of age very rarely need corporal punishment, and when it is necessary it is very slight. It would be impossible without much labour to obtain a complete return of the cases of corporal punishment in these schools; and I do not think such a return is called for. The schools are conducted by responsible bodies of managers, who must be allowed some discretion in dealing with the children and young persons under their care; and I have no reason to think that there is any unnecessary use of corporal punishment.

Detentions in Industrial Schools.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of boys and girls who were under detention in industrial schools on 1st January, 1908, and how many of these were under six and between six and ten; and if he will say at what age the boys are separated from the girls, and what female care is subsequently provided for the boys.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The number of children in industrial schools in England and Wales on the 1st January, 1908, was 11,508 (8,789 boys and 2,719 girls) of whom 102 (48 boys and 54 girls) were under six years of age, and 1,187

(755 boys and 432 girls) were between six and ten. There is now only one mixed school in England, and even there the boys and girls are in separate class-rooms and play-grounds, and are housed in separate, though contiguous buildings. In all shore schools for boys there is provision for female care whether in the form of matrons or trained nurses.

Shooting Outrages in Ireland.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state for the last year for which the figures are available the total number of cases reported to the police in Great Britain of firing at the person and at property; and in how many cases did the police fail to secure convictions.

Mr. GLADSTONE: No, Sir; the information at my disposal does not enable me to state separately the number of offences of firing at the person and at property.

Murders in Great Britain.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the total number of murders in Great Britain within the last five years for which statistics are available; the number of cases in which prosecutions followed; the number of cases for which no person was put on trial; and the number of cases in which accused persons were acquitted.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My information extends only to England and Wales; any question as to Scotland should be addressed to the Secretary for Scotland. The total number of murders known to the police during the five years 1902–6 was 751, including 267 cases of infanticide. The number of persons prosecuted for murder by the Director of Public Prosecutions was 623; this is not quite the total number of such prosecutions, a few cases having been undertaken by the prosecuting solicitor for the City of Liverpool. The number acquitted at their trial was sixty-nine.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: In view of the fact that these figures show that a large number of murderers are running loose in this country, would it be fair on the part of an hon. Member of this House to allege that the English people are a race of murderers and assassins?

[No Answer was returned.]

Metropolitan Police.

Mr. T. DAVIES (Fulham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now favourably consider the granting to the members of the Metropolitan police force one day's rest in seven, and accordingly make provision in his Estimates to enable him to put it into operation this year.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am sorry that the financial difficulties in the way of this proposal which I mentioned last session have in no way diminished. Having regard to the large cost of the proposed change and to the present conditions of pay and service I do not think it would be right by simple executive action to place so large an additional burden on London ratepayers. Moreover, such action must inevitably affect the conditions of service and the pay in all the police forces in the country. I think therefore that the question cannot be confined to London and that careful examination of all its bearings would have to precede any decision.

Licensing Compensations.

Mr. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any application for permission to raise money under the Licensing Act of 1904 for the purpose of providing compensation has been made to the Home Office; and whether in any case the Home Office has refused to allow the loan to be spread over a longer period than one year; and, if so, on what grounds such refusal has been made.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I have received and granted several applications for permission to borrow on the security of the Compensation Funds under the Licensing Act 1904. I have required the loans sanctioned during the past year to be repaid at or about the end of the present year, that is to say at latest out of the compensation levy to be made in 1908. In view of pending legislation I have thought it desirable to avoid so far as possible creating liabilities which would continue beyond the date when any amendment of the law may take effect.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the amount levied upon and paid by the trade in respect of the licences extinguished under the operation of the Licensing Act of 1904.

MR. GLADSTONE: Full information on this subject is given in the Annual Volumes of Licensing Statistics. The Volume for 1907 is not yet completed, but I can give the following figures as approximately correct:—In the three years 1905, 1906, 1907, the compensation authorities in England and Wales have received from charges imposed on existing on licences under the Act of 1904 a total sum of about £3,289,163. Out of this a total of about £2,310,960 has been paid away in compensation for licences extinguished.

MR. LIEF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) asked if this money had not actually been paid by the consumers of intoxicants.

MR. GLADSTONE'S reply was inaudible.

Midwifery.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has considered the provisions of the Midwives Act, 1902, which forbid the practices habitually and for gain, of midwifery after 1st January, 1910, by any woman not certified under the Act; whether he is aware that much doubt exists whether it will be found possible then and in future for trained certified midwives to earn an adequate livelihood by the practice of their profession in rural districts where population and births are few in number; and whether in view of the importance of proper care for mother and child, and the close proximity of the date after which unskilled attendance is forbidden, he is prepared to introduce further legislation charging the supervising authorities, as created by the Act of 1902, with the duty and the power of securing for all cases of childbirth within their area such efficient nursing as the Act requires, but for which no provision is made.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): The attention of the Government has been called to this matter, which is primarily one for the Lord President of the Council. I understand that the whole subject is receiving his consideration, and that he is in communication with the Central Midwives Board with regard to it.

Rating of Land Values.

MR. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the Report on the Rating of Land Values in Queensland; and whether the Valuation Bill mentioned in the King's Speech will include provisions for the separate valuation of land and buildings; and, if so, when he proposes to introduce it.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to the Report referred to in the Question. The proposals of the Government on the subject of valuation will be explained to the House when the Bill is introduced. I am not able at the present time to fix a date for its introduction.

Metropolitan Returning Officer.

*MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Local Government Board in connection with the petition from twenty-two Metropolitan borough councils on the subject of the appointment of returning officers for Parliamentary elections in the county of London, if he will state how many of the Metropolitan borough councils were in favour of the proposal in Clause 6 of the Elections and Registration (London) Bill, that the clerk of the county council should be returning officer for Parliamentary elections in the County of London, and how many prayed that the town clerks of each Metropolitan borough council should be appointed to that office.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): The petition referred to, which was presented in October, 1906, did not ask that the clerk of the County Council should be the returning officer at Parliamentary elections in London, and I am not aware that the proposal to form London into one Parliamentary borough was then before the Metropolitan borough councils. It did ask that the town clerks of the borough councils should be the returning officers for Parliamentary elections. If effect were given to the proposal in Clause 6 of the Bill, elections in the Parliamentary borough of London would be conducted in the same manner as in the case of elections of County Councillors. At the latter elections it is the practice to appoint the town clerks as deputy returning officers, and if, as no doubt would be the case, this practice were extended to Parliamentary elections I apprehend that the object of the petitioners would in substance be attained.

*MR. GUINNESS: Did not the right hon. Gentleman himself officially state that twenty-two out of the twenty-nine councils petitioned in favour of Clause 6?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to make quotations from speeches and raise a question on them.

MR. B. S. STRAUS: But is it not the fact that the clause referred to does exactly what these councils desired?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter the hon. Member can decide for himself by reading the Bill.

Blychau School, Denbighshire.

MR. BRIDGEMAN. (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he has received an appeal from the managers of Bylchau school, Denbighshire, and a petition from more than ten ratepayers in the district, under Section 8 (1) of the Education Act, 1902, against the proposal to erect a new provided school; if he is aware that, although the local education authority affixed a notice to the church door stating that an inquiry would be held, the Board have granted personal interviews to those who desire the new school and have given no opportunity for those who oppose it to be heard; and if he will state what action he proposes to take.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouth, N.): The Answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. I am not aware of any notice stating that an inquiry would be held, and I think the hon. Member must be referring to the public notice which the local education authority are required to give under Section 8 of the Act, which dealt only with the proposal to provide a new school, and as far as I know made no suggestion of any inquiry. No interview has taken place with regard to the necessity of this school and none has been asked for on this question.

Training Colleges.

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, whether, if a training college is removed from the list of recognised colleges in consequence of failure to comply with the new regulations as to admission of students, it will still be possible for students attending it to enter for the examination of students in training colleges held by the Board, and to be recognised by the Board subsequently for professional purposes as fully as if they had been at a training college in receipt of grants.

MR. MCKENNA: A training college which fails to comply with the new regulation requiring students to be admitted without regard to religious belief or social antecedents will be liable to removal from the list of colleges recognised as eligible to receive Government grants. It may, however, after removal from the list, continue to be accepted by the Board as a place suitable for the training of teachers for public elementary scohols if the Board are satisfied as to its educational efficiency, and students attending it may in that case be admitted to the Board's examination on the same conditions as students who are trained in recognised colleges, and will be eligible in that way to become certificated teachers, though no grants can be paid on their account. Arrangements will be made, when occasion arises, for the establishment of a list of certified training colleges (on the lines of the Board's list of efficient secondary schools) which would comprise all the training colleges both grant-earning and non-grant-earning, recognised as efficient by the Board of Education.

Secondary School Regulations.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he can state how many local education authorities have passed resolutions under Article 43 of the Regulations for Secondary Schools; what schools have been the subject of these resolutions; what are the conditions which the Board has been asked in each case to waive; and what action the Board has taken in response to the requests of the local authorities.

MR. McKENNA: A considerable number of resolutions passed by local education authorities under Article 43 of the Regulations for Secondary Schools have reached, and are still reaching, theBoard of Education. The total number of authorities from whom such resolutions have been received is thirty-six. Some of these resolutions have already been considered by the Board, and they have thought fit in the case of fourteen schools to waive one or more of the conditions imposed by the new Regulations for 1907. They have not thought fit to waive any of the conditions referred to in the resolutions as regards three schools at Southampton, Bury, and Peterborough, respectively. The greater number of the resolutions are still under consideration, and a full return showing for each school the articles which the Board were asked to waive and their decision as regards each article will be laid before Parliament when the process is complete. It is hoped that the return will be ready in the course of April

Victoria and Albert Museum.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what progress has been made in the constitution and appointment of an Advisory Committee for the arrangement and organisation of the art collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington.

MR. McKENNA: The preliminary arrangements for the constitution and organisation of an Advisory Council for the art museum have been completed, and Treasury sanction has now been obtained to the proposals. The matter is, however, complicated by the fact that in planning and carrying out the various Departmental changes needed to give to the new council its proper degree of responsibility, regard must also be had to the new circumstances that will arise out of the impending transfer to the Whitehall offices of that branch of the Board's offices which is now located at South Kensington in order to provide that arrangements for the conduct of the administrative side of the museum may work equally satisfactorily when that transference takes place. As soon as it is possible to introduce the new arrangement, which will also provide for the work of the new Advisory Council, the Board will proceed with the appointment of that body. I hope that this may be possible early in the coming financial year.

Irish Teachers' Salaries.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for East Down, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in view of the coming revision of the Irish teachers' salaries, he can state if special consideration will be given to the cases of teachers who left the training colleges in 1898 and 1899 and who obtained first division of second class with special distinction; whether he is aware that, under the rules then in force, these teachers would have received first-class salary after two years highly efficient service, and that, notwithstanding the prospects then held out, and the subsequent good reports of the Board's inspectors, many of these teachers, after a lapse of nine or ten years, are receiving only third-grade salary; and if he can state whether it is the intention of the Commissioners of National Education to promote such of the above-mentioned teachers at present only third-grade, and who are principals of schools with an average of thirty and upwards, to at least second-grade.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the class of teachers referred to in the Question has already received full consideration and each particular case has been dealt with on its merits. My predecessor gave full particulars of the matter in reply to a Question put by the hon. Member for South Belfast on 11th April, 1906, and I would refer the hon. Member to that Answer. In reply to the concluding part of the Question, the Commissioners will in due course fully consider the claims to promotion of the teachers referred to.

Coonana Pier.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Congested Districts Board has agreed to supply a beacon light for the pier at Coonana, county Kerry, in accordance with the request of the local fishermen and with the resolution passed by the Cahirciveen District Council.

MR. BIRRELL: The Congested Districts Board are making arrangements to place a light on the pier in question.

Irish Local Government Audit Fees.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that under the District Auditors Act of 1879, the fee for auditing the accounts of local authorities in England is fixed by scale, and that under this scale the fee for auditing the accounts of Down County Council would be about £45, whereas the auditing actually costs that body £100, in addition to £30 for the asylum accounts and other sums paid from local sources; whether Irish fees are fixed at random instead of by scale; and whether by Order in Council, or otherwise, he will take steps to reduce the charges for official auditing in Ireland.

MR. BIRRELL: I understand that the fees for auditing the accounts of local authorities in England are fixed by scale. I have no information as to what the fee for auditing the accounts of the Down County Council would amount to on that scale, but I am advised that the financial system is so entirely different in the two countries that a scale fixed for Ireland on the same basis would not give adequate remuneration for the work to be done. The Irish audit fees are not fixed at random, but are determined by the Local Government Board after careful consideration of the circumstances in each case, the volume of the work to be done and the time necessarily occupied being the chief factors. The amount of work depends rather on the number of items in the account than on the amounts of those items. It is not proposed to reduce the fees. Any change should rather be in the direction of increasing them, seeing that the fees charged to local authorities are £6,000 a year less than the cost of the audits.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: What financial conditions prevail in Ireland which makes it necessary that the fees charged for auditing the accounts of the public bodies should be exactly three times as much as they are in England?

MR. BIRRELL: I am told that the number of accounts to be audited is so great that the English scale would not be proper remuneration for the work done.

MR. JOYCE: Why is it that the Irish Local Government Board have authority to make these charges without consulting the local elected bodies who have to pay simply any charge the Board like to make?

MR. BIRRELL: It must be borne in mind that even as it is the audit costs £6,000 more than is charged to the local authorities.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Has the attention of the right hon. Gentleman been directed to the decision of the Court of King's Bench that the charges for auditing the accounts should be inclusive of the charges for auditing committee accounts? Is not the Local Government Board making a separate charge for the committee accounts?

MR. BIRRELL: Of course the Local Government Board will have to act on that decision.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: They are not doing so.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is it because Ireland is the poorer country?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman press the Local Government Board on this matter?

MR. BIRRELL: I will certainly call for a full explanation.

Lord Ashtown's Gamekeeper.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland who were the Lords Justices acting on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland who, early on 14th January last, reviewed the sentence of imprisonment imposed on Lord Ashtown's gamekeepers late in the afternoon of 13th January at Ballymacarbery petty sessions; on whose report or at whose instance did the review of the sentence take place; was the chairman of the bench of magistrates communicated with before the review of the sentence, or was any communication received by the Lords Justices from any magistrate present or from any police officer; whether there is any precedent for the rapidity of the review of the sentence in these cases; and who were the Lords Justices acting in November, 1906, who then reviewed the sentence passed on Graham, one of the gamekeepers sentenced on the 13th ultimo.

MR. BIRRELL: The Lords Justices sworn in for the government of Ireland during the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant from 7th January to 1st February, 1908, were the Lord Chancellor, General Lord Grenfell, and Mr. Justice Johnson. The Lord-Lieutenant himself acted in November, 1906, in the case referred to in the concluding part of the Question. As regards the remainder of the Question I can only repeat my Answer of the 5th instant, namely, that it would be contrary to practice and irregular to state the reasons which influence the exercise of the Lord-Lieutenant's prerogative in such cases. I do not therefore propose to make any inquiries as to the information upon which the Lords Justices acted in this case.

MR. POWER: Are we to understand that the Lords Justices acted on the *ex parte* statement of a minority of the bench and never took the trouble to consult the majority?

MR. BIRRELL: I understand the Lord Chancellor had all the facts before him and upon them determined to exercise the prerogative in the manner he did.

Thompson-Orpen Estate, Cork –Sale of Evicted Tenant's Interest.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an eviction sale took place recently at the Courthouse, Cork, of the interest of Timothy Murphy, of Coolekerane, Millstreet, County Cork, in his holding on the Thompson-Orpen estate, that the tenant offered a reasonable settlement by way of purchase or the giving of a fair rent, and that this was refused by the agent on the estate, Mr. H. D. M. Barton, the Bush, Antrim, and that proceedings for the eviction of the tenant have been since instituted in the High Courts, Dublin, and notice of eviction served on the relieving officer for the Millstreet Union,; and, seeing the danger to the public peace from a harsh eviction of this kind, will he state what steps, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that no proceedings for the sale of the estate referred to in the Question have been instituted before them. Assuming, however, that the facts of the case are as stated by the hon. Member, it does not appear that the Government would have any power to interfere. A landlord cannot be prevented from exercising his legal rights under the machinery of the Courts of law.

Floods in County Clare.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has recently received any representations as to the urgent need for drainage in the Scariff district, county Clare; and whether, in view of the loss sustained by the people of the district owing to floods, he will give the matter his immediate attention.

MR. BIRRELL: Yes, Sir, but I regret to say that I cannot hold out hopes that the Scariff district will be exceptionally dealt with in priority to other localities similarly affected by floods. Apart from the difficulty of obtaining funds for the purpose, there does not appear to be any local authority vested with legal power to undertake works of improvement on the Scariff river, nor could it be expected that under existing conditions this want could be supplied by the formation of a drainage district under the Drainage Act of 1863.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: If the right hon. Gentleman cannot deal with the Scariff district in an exceptional manner, will he consider the advisability of dealing without delay with all those districts where people suffer very severely from floods, and can he hold out any hope that the Government will in the near future do something to prevent the tremendous loss of property and distress caused by the floods? I can assure the right hon. Gentleman I have visited these districts and know it is heartrending to see the sufferings of the people. Something must be done.

MR. BIRRELL: I am fully acquainted with the circumstances, and am certain the matter demands full consideration. It is a matter for the Treasury, as the expense would be very large, but it would be cruel for me to hold out any immediate hopes that I shall be able to supply the funds.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Then are the people in the districts affected by floods to understand that no help will be given them? If so, it will be, I am afraid, a serious matter

MR. BIRRELL: We are trying to do our very best, but I do not want to hold out false hopes. The Irish Government cannot be expected to do anything immediately, but I should be sorry to have it said nothing is to be done.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: If money is not now forthcoming, will the right hon. Gentleman promise an inquiry at once into the extent of the damage done by these floods and the amount required to apply a remedy. It is a very serious matter and has already been pending for years.

[No Answer was returned.]

Lord Ashtown and the Minnie Walsh Prosecutions.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Lord Ashtown or his agent, Mr. Trench, made any charge against Mrs. Minnie Walsh, either of obtaining money under false pretences or of carrying on a criminal correspondence, until after the Member for the division put the Crown in motion.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Lord Ashtown did inform the authorities, previous to 12th September last, that he was in correspondence with Mrs. Minnie Walsh; on which date the county inspector called upon him to explain how he had invited the police to be at Woodlawn church on the night of 31st August; and whether five persons had been invited to go to the church the same night to assist in placing a bomb under the church.

I beg further to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Crown had a letter in their possession written to a man named Larkin offering him a large sum of money if he would assist in placing a bomb under the church at Woodlawn on the night of 31st August last; and, if so, can he state why it was not produced at the late trial.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (MR. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this and the two following Questions, and with the hon. Member's permission I will answer the three together. Lord Ashtown and his agent, Mr. Trench, from the beginning gave full information to the authorities of the correspondence which was taking place between Mrs. Walsh and them. They did not prefer any direct charge against her. The proceedings against her and her son were taken at my instance upon the information and documents furnished by Lord Ashtown and Mr. Trench, in conjunction with those furnished by the hon. Member himself. The first information was given by Lord Ashtown in the month of June last. It is the fact that five persons were invited to assist in blowing up a church; this was done by anonymous letter as proved in evidence at the trial. The letter referred to in the third Question was handed by the hon. Member to the Chief Crown Solicitor's assistant in the police court on 13th December last. The basis of the charges then under investigation consisted of four anonymous letters in precisely similar terms. In order to put this fifth letter in evidence, it would have been necessary to postpone the hearing and have the letter submitted to an expert for examination, and it was not considered necessary to incur the additional expense and delay which would have been involved in adopting this course. No material addition would have been made to the evidence against the accused by this letter.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman what was the date on which Lord Ashtown first communicated to the authorities in Dublin his correspondence with Mrs. Minnie Walsh and the receipt of the anonymous letters with reference to the supposed outrage?

MR. CHERRY: In June last.

MR. DILLON: How could he communicate to the authorities in Dublin in June the correspondence and letters which were not received until the month of August.

MR. CHERRY: They were earlier. The letters were in June.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S,): Is it not a fact that none of these five letters written to men in Galway were written in June—that they were not written earlier than August?

MR. CHERRY: I was not referring to the anonymous letters. These letters were first brought to the attention of the Executive by the hon. Member for East Galway. What I was referring to was the letters between Lord Ashtown, Mr. Trench, and Mrs. Walsh.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: May I ask on what date he told about the transaction about the five letters?

MR. CHERRY: I cannot give you that.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: But the matter is important.

MR. CHERRY: What I have to say is that they kept in touch with the authorities from day to day, informing them as it went on.

MR. DILLON: Are we to understand then that from June last the authorities in Dublin were aware that Lord Ashtown had Mrs. Walsh in his employment seeking for information as to outrage?

MR. CHERRY: I do not think Lord Ashtown could be said to have her in his employment until he gave her £5.

MR. KILBRIDE: Is it not a fact that the anonymous letter, extracts from which Mr. Trench gave to the Inspector-General of Constabulary in Dublin, was the letter handed in to his office by Percy Walsh, the boy?

MR. CHERRY: I understand the anonymous letters were those which the hon. Member for East Galway gave to the authorities.

MR. KILBRIDE: Is it not a fact that the boy, Percy Walsh, who was acquitted at the trial, handed in to Trench's office an anonymous letter and that it was extracts from that letter that Trench gave to the Inspector-General of Constabulary in Dublin, and that put them in motion, and that that was not done until late in August or in the early part of September?

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Member should give notice of these details. The Attorney-General cannot be expected to carry them all in his recollection.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: As it is desirable that this should be cleared up, I wish to ask what it is the right hon. Gentleman means by a direct charge; he said that Lord Ashtown made no direct charge against her; may I ask did he at any time make any charge against her?

MR. CHERRY: What I meant to say was that Lord Ashtown—[NATIONALIST cries of "Answer the Question"]—what I meant to say was that Lord Ashtown merely furnished information as to the facts, stating the letters received and what they were doing in these matters. They left it to us to say whether we would take proceedings or not, and I decided upon my own authority that proceedings should be taken.

MR. JOHN ROCHE: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the first part of my Question, namely, whether Lord Ashtown or his agent, Mr. Trench, has made any charge against Mrs. Minnie Walsh either of obtaining money under false pretences or of carrying on a criminal correspondence until after the Monday when the Member for the division set the Crown in motion.

MR. CHERRY: I think I have already answered that Question. [NATIONALIST cries of "No."] Lord Ashtown merely stated the facts—it was I who formulated the charge.

MR. JOHN ROCHE: When?

MR. CHERRY: When the prosecution commenced in the police court.

County Donegal Audits.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to a claim made by, and fees paid to, the Local Government Board amounting to £40 2s. for auditing the accounts of the county Donegal committees of agriculture and technical instruction, which fees should be included in the £100 paid annually by the county council to the Local Government Board for auditing the county accounts; and whether, seeing that these fees were illegally charged, he will take steps to have them refunded.

MR. BIRRELL: The accounts of the committees affected by the judicial decision in the Cork case will for the present be audited by the Local Government Board without audit fee, pending further consideration of the position. A legal question, however, arises as to whether such committees are entitled to recover from the Board the fees paid for past audits. It is open to the Donegal Committee to take steps to obtain a judicial decision on this point. The Local Government Board have no power, without an order of the Court, to refund the fees in question.

Traffic in Firearms in Ireland.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the traffic in firearms has increased considerably in numerous districts in Ireland since the repeal, in 1906, of the Peace Preservation Act, 1881; that firearms have since been openly on sale throughout Ireland; and that, from the last published Report of the Board of Inland Revenue, it appears that, while the number of 10s. gun-licences issued in Ireland in 1902–1903, 1903–1904, 1904–1905, and 1905–1906 was 18,237, 18,047, 18,484, and 18,877, respectively, the number issued in 1906–1907 was only 19,159, notwithstanding the removal of the restrictions imposed on the possession of arms by the repealed Act of 1881; and, seeing that it is now open to any person to keep a gun within the curtilage of his house and farm without being obliged to take out a 10s. licence, will he say upon whom rests the duty of enforcing the provisions of the Gun Licence Act of 1870, in the event of such person being found carrying a gun outside the curtilage of his house and farm; whether there are any duties imposed on the police in the enforcement of the Act; whether any representations have been made to him that firearms are at present freely obtainable and carried; and whether he will consider the question of introducing legislation having for its object the re-enactment of the restrictions and safeguards imposed by the Act of 1881.

MR. BIRRELL: There has doubtless been some increase in the traffic in firearms in Ireland, but the police authorities inform me that the increase appears to be not more than would ordinarily follow the removal of a restriction as to carrying arms. Firearms have always been openly on sale in Ireland. The only limitation heretofore was in respect of the persons who might possess them. The figures as to gun licences are correctly quoted from the Report of the Board of Inland Revenue. The duty of enforcing the Gun Licence Act of 1870 rests on the officers of Inland Revenue, but the police co-operate with them under the authority of Section 9 of that Act. Firearms are now freely obtainable in Ireland as elsewhere. That, indeed, is the necessary result of not renewing the Act of 1881. I have already informed the hon. Member that it is not intended to re-enact that Act.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Is it not a fact that the number of shooting outrages has increased very largely since we refused to renew this Act?

MR. BIRRELL: The number of shooting outrages has increased during the last month or so, but the figures are not larger than they have been at previous times in Irish history, and it would not be safe to connect the two facts.

Ireland and The Pistols Act.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill extending to Ireland the provisions of The Pistols Act, 1903; and, if so, can he state when the measure will be introduced.

MR. BIRRELL: The Government are considering the advisability of introducing a Bill on this subject, but I am not at present in a position to make any definite statement.

Land Purchase—The Pollock Estate.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants of the Pollock estate have refused to pay rent until the estate is handed over to the Estates Commissioners; and whether those officials will be instructed to decline any properties for sale which are offered to them under illegal pressure of this kind.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have been informed that in December last the tenants on the Pollock Estate refused to pay their rents until the Commissioners should buy the estate. The Commissioners had commenced informal negotiations for the purchase of the estate so far back as June, 1905, and a formal application was made by the owner to the Commissioners to purchase the estate in August, 1906. The question of price has been the subject of protracted negotiations with the owner, but the Commissioners hope that an agreement will shortly be arrived at. These facts show that the negotiations for sale had been entered upon long before the refusal to pay rent.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG was understood to ask if the Estates Commissioners should not refuse to enter into negotiations for the sale of the estates, the tenants of which have applied illegal pressure by refusing to pay rents.

MR. BIRRELL: I understand that in this case there was no such illegal pressure before the negotiations which have been pending for years.

Case of James Lindsay.

MR. JOHN ROCHE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the prosecution and conviction at sessions recently held at Athenry, of a steward of Mr. Shaw Taylor's, named James Lindsay, for stealing bacon from the shop of Mr. Campbell; whether he is aware that Lindsay produced in court a character from Lord Ashtown, in which he stated that Lindsay was sober and honest; and whether this man is provided with police protection.

Mr. BIRRELL: The fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. Lindsay produced in court a letter from his former employer, Lord Ashtown, testifying that Lindsay was, whilst in his employment, honest and sober. Lindsay has been receiving police protection for the past year, during which he has been employed as a caretaker by Mr. Shaw Taylor.

Mr. BELLOC: Did Lord Ashtown say that this man was sober and honest?

Mr. BIRRELL: He was asked for the man's character, and said that in his opinion he was sober and honest.

Lord Ashtown's Gamekeeper.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the recent prosecution and conviction, at Athenry petty sessions, of a gamekeeper of Lord Ashtown's for having in his possession a loaded revolver while drunk upon the public street; whether the country has to bear the expense of providing this man with police protection; and what action, if any, the Government intend to take in this case.

Mr. BIRRELL: Patrick McDermott, who is a gamekeeper in Lord Ashtown's employment, was recently fined for drunkenness while in possession of a loaded revolver. McDermott receives police protection, but it is provided by the established force and does not involve a charge on the county funds. The man has been punished for his offence, and no further action is called for.

Mr. DILLON: Will he be allowed to carry a revolver in the future? Does he require that as he is under police protection?

Mr. KILBRIDE: Is this the man whose name was mentioned in the case of Lord Ashtown *v.* Minnie Walsh?

Mr. BIRRELL: I cannot say.

Mr. KILBRIDE: Well, he is.

Guards of Honour for Irish Judges of Assize.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he can say if it is intended to continue the practice of furnishing guards of honour to the Judges of Assize in Ireland; from what source is the expense thereof defrayed; and, in view of the fact that the Lord Chief Justice frequently walked from his temporary residence to the Cork court house during the last winter assizes, unescorted and unattended, and many of the learned Judges dislike this quasi-military parade in connection with the discharge of civil functions, the Irish Government will consider the advisability of modifying or abolishing it.

Mr. CHERRY: By long established usage military or police guards of honour and escorts are furnished to the going Judges of Assize in Ireland. When the guard is a military one the expense, if any, is defrayed from Army Votes, but the amount must be immaterial seeing that the practice of supplying such guards is confined to garrison towns. When the guard is supplied by the police the cost falls on the Vote for the Royal Irish Constabulary. There is no official information showing that the Lord Chief Justice dispensed with an escort at the last winter assizes at Cork. It is not intended to discontinue the practice in question.

Mr. FLYNN: Will the right hon. Gentleman accept it from me that at the last assizes I frequently saw learned Judges walking about unescorted and unattended?

Mr. CHERRY: Certainly.

NEW BILLS.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

"To amend The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1854," presented by Mr. Pirie; supported by Dr. Ambrose, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Gretton, Sir William Holland, Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Nussey; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 5th May, and to be printed. [Bill 71.]

TRUSTS BILL.

"To codify the Law relating to private Trusts and Trustees," presented by Mr. Rendall; supported by Mr. Cave, Mr. Micklem, Mr. Stewart-Smith, Mr. Buckmaster, Mr. Stanger, Mr. Hills, Mr. Bertram, and Mr. Radford; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 72.]

TOBACCO GROWING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To repeal the Law which prohibits the Growing of Tobacco in Scotland," presented by Mr. Morton; supported by Mr. John Deans Hope, Mr. Smeaton, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. McCallum, Mr. Pirie, Mr. Dundas White, Mr. Weir, and Sir Robert Jardine; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 73.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to votes at Parliamentary Elections," presented by Mr. John Robertson; supported by Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Burt, Mr. Alden, Mr. Higham, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Mr. Dalziel, and Mr. Dundas White; to be read a second time upon Friday, 10th April, and to be printed. [Bill 74.]

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS BILL.

"To amend The Industrial Schools Act, 1866," presented by Mr. Atherley-Jones; supported by Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Hamar Greenwood, Mr. John Deans Hope, Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, and Mr. Lloyd Morgan; to be read a second time upon Friday, 28th February, and to be printed. [Bill 75.]

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (ELECTION OF ALDERMEN) BILL.

"To amend The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, as to the election of Aldermen," presented by Mr. Holt, supported by Mr. Barran, Mr. Brunner, Mr. Cheetham, Mr. T. P. O'Connor; Mr. Toulmin, Mr. William H. Lever, and Colonel Seely; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, and to be printed. [Bill 76.]

IRISH PEERAGES BILL,

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL said he made no apology for asking leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Statutes in reference to the Irish Peerage, because everything in relation to the Irish Peerage had been rendered interesting by recent events. He would say in reference to the Bill that he would not have introduced it, and certainly not in that way, if he had not the support of Members of his own Party and of Members representing every section of Liberal opinion in the House; and for fear the Bill should be considered revolutionary in any way, he would state to the House that it was the exact Bill that was introduced and carried in all its stages in the House of Lords thirty-two years ago. It was carried by the Ministry of that day and brought down to this House under the care of Lord Ashbourne, then Mr. Edward Gibson, but somehow or other it was lost. It was a Bill in one clause and was simply this: to repeal the various statutes by which, and under statutory powers, Irish peerages were created. It had nothing to do with prerogative, because Irish peerages were not now created under the old power of prerogative, but under statute, with very fixed limitations. Perhaps he might be allowed to explain that. It had been frequently said that at the time of the Scottish Union the prerogative for creating Scottish peers was abolished, and that at the time of the Irish Union the prerogative for creating Irish peers was not abolished but was limited. That was not true. There was no prerogative abolished at the time of the Scottish Union. Scotland was a separate kingdom until the year 1707, and her king had the right of creating peerages, and when that kingdom was fused in England the Scottish peers became by statute peers of Great Britain. In the Scottish Union Bill, which he had carefully read, there was not one single word about any abolition of the prerogative, nor was there in the Irish Act of Union, which was exactly on the lines of the Scottish Union until this point, that a provision was made that when three Irish peerages extant at the time of the Union became extinct one Irish peerage might be created, until the Irish peerage was reduced to the number of 100. By Irish peerages, he did not mean peers of Great Britain with Irish titles and peerages, but peers of Ireland, who had no hereditary seats in the House of Lords. When the number of Irish peerages was reduced to 100 the words of the statute were imperative that the number of peers should be filled up and kept on at that number. Sir John Coleridge gave that opinion in the House of Lords, and if he was right, to show the absurdity of the thing, eight Irish peerages should be filled up at this moment. He would only use the literal words that could be quoted out of the mouth of an Irish peer in reference to this position. In the Irish Parliament at the time of the Union, when this provision for having what they called a degraded Irish peerage was proposed by the Government, it was fiercely opposed. He had in his hands a copy of a private letter written by Lord Cornwallis, the Lord-Lieutenant of the Union, to the Duke of Portland, who was the medium of communication between the Irish Government and this country. In 1800, when the Union was well advanced, he said in that letter that—

> "So violent a spirit had arisen amongst the Irish lords and amongst those who were the best friends of the Government, against the reservation of the power of creating Irish peers after the Union, that it was the general opinion of His Majesty's principal servants there that the clause could not be carried. The language amongst peers was that they could not abandon the interests of their posterity, that the persons who were thereafter to be created peers of Ireland would be men of weight and consequence in England, who would always succeed to the vacancies in the representative peerage, and that the families of the ancient peers would be reduced to a state of contempt and insignificance."

They were for once good prophets, but when they made that prophecy they thought that an English gentleman without any peerage at all would be given an Irish peerage, that in due course of time, through some influence or other, he would be made an Irish representative peer, and they thought it was very horrible and degrading; but they never contemplated that an English gentleman would become an Irish peer thirty years after the last Irish peer was created, and that he should ask that the Irish peers should elect him as a representative peer. They never considered that, although they were prescient enough. In 1874, on account of a Motion instituted in the House of Lords to prevent the creation of fresh Irish peers, a special Committee of the House of Lords was created under the Chairmanship of Lord Rosebery, and that Committee reported unanimously that the Irish peerage was an anomaly, and that any fresh creation of an Irish peerage was not right or necessary and was a highly unconstitutional act. After that the Bill of which he had made a copy passed the House of Lords unanimously, and what he asked leave to do was to produce now what passed the House of Lords thirty years ago and prevent for ever after such an anomaly as they had witnessed recently in the Irish peerage election. He asked leave to introduce the Bill.

Motion made and Question—"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Law concerning the Peerage of Ireland"—put and agreed to. Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. MacNeill, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Beaumont, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Smeaton, Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, and Mr. William Redmond.

IRISH PEERAGE BILL.

"To amend the Law concerning the Peerage of Ireland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 77.]

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL AND LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL—ALLOCATION OF TIME.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): The Resolution which stands on the Paper will seem at first sight to be sufficiently long and comprehensive, but there is one small point which could not be expressed in any such Resolution, and which it is necessary for me to deal with. In order to bring myself within the express terms of Standing Order 66, I take this opportunity of saying that the Motion required for the charge which would be imposed by a clause dealing with salaries in the Small Landholders Bill is made with the requisite recommendation of the Crown. Having acquitted myself on that necessary point, I now proceed to move this Resolution. This Motion for allocation of time differs from any that I have found it my duty to propose to the House during the last two sessions, and, as far as I am aware, from any proposed by those preceding me on this Bench. The Motion proposes a more summary method than we have been accustomed to. It is undoubtedly a novelty, and it is therefore necessary that I should justify what is an unusual proceeding. That justification I find amply provided in the circumstances of the case. I am glad to say that I think I can make good the justification and explain the circumstances without any reference to the controversial merits of either of these two Bills and without any reproach addressed to either of the Houses with respect to their dealings with this matter. Whatever we may feel on this matter, it is not necessary for my purpose to say a word on any such subject. What are the plain facts of the case? I take first the Small Landholders Bill. When this House was invited to consider that measure last session, it was already practically familiar with its general scope and with its provisions. It was no new measure. It had been brought in in the previous year—in July, 1906—and it had been before the country during the autumn and winter of that year. Very little notice, I daresay, was taken of it in England and Ireland, but in Scotland it was hotly canvassed, closely examined, and received, as we believe, a predominant amount of favour among those who were interested in the matter. Last session ample opportunities were given for the further consideration of this Bill. Let me remind the House of the facts. The greater part of a day was given to the First Reading. Two days were given to the Second Reading. It was sent to the Standing Committee at the end of April, and after twenty-two sittings, lasting until the end of July three days were given to the Report stage, and a Friday to the Third Reading. Therefore, when in August, 1907, the House of Commons expressed its final judgment on this Bill, it was a mature, well-informed, and definite judgment that we pronounced. Now is there any reason to suppose that since that time there has been a wavering of opinion with regard to this Bill among the mass of the people of Scotland? And, after all, it is the mass of the people of Scotland who are mostly interested in this 'Bill. There is no reason whatever to believe that there has been the slightest alteration except in the direction of intensification of the feeling in favour of the Bill. On the contrary, everything tends to show that the object and the provisions of the Bill are more and more heartily approved and more and more eagerly desired. Let me, in passing, mention another fact that deserves notice. Hon Members will remember that when this question of small holdings came before us last session there was expressed, as regards both England and Scotland, an extraordinary willingness on the part of the landowners to concede land for small holdings. But great doubt was expressed as to whether there was any corresponding desire on the part of those concerned to obtain small holdings. The House will remember all the questions that were asked about certain returns which were held to show that the agricultural districts were wholly apathetic. Since last summer the Small Holdings Bill for England has become law, and its reception, and the action taken on it, has placed beyond doubt the reality and strength of the demand for small holdings, a demand which, as any one who knows anything of the two countries is aware, is even more vivid and urgent in Scotland than in England. So much for the Small Holdings Bill. I have traced its career to the time when it was carried along the passage to the other House. I turn now to the Land Values Bill, containing the much-combated principle of the separate valuation of land. Was this a rashly precipitated measure, an unheard-of revolutionary proposal which required an extraordinary amount of time for its consideration? Why, during the period of office of the late Government, at a time when the Conservative majority was almost supreme within these walls, Bills embodying that principle were on four separate occasions submitted to the

House, and on two occasions received the approval of the House of Commons We claim, therefore, that both these measures were well understood in this House and out of it, and we further claim that they answer a real and urgent need, and that the House of Commons has pronounced a settled opinion upon them. These Bills, however, failed to pass into law. How was that? They were sent up in the expiring days of August—perhaps I should more correctly say in the days of expiring August. The larger measure was subjected to some criticism, and then the debate on the Second Reading was adjourned *sine die*, and the intention openly expressed by its opponents was that the Bill should be entirely remodelled, and that provisions of another kind altogether should take the place of those which we put forward. It became obvious that in the last days of August so large an operation could not be carried out and discussed in both Houses during what remained of the session. It was the more hopeless because the views indicated by the opponents of the measure in the other place involved a strong prejudice—I will say no more—against the cardinal principles of the Bill, one of which is the establishment of a Court for the fixing of rent, and the other the granting of a fixed tenure of occupation, and they being the matter of dispute it became, I will not say impossible, but obviously extremely difficult, to arrive at a reconciliation of the views entertained by the advocates and the opponents of the Bill. Therefore this Bill came naturally to an end. The Land Values Bill, on the other hand, was denied a Second Reading. Much exception was taken to its principle, but the main reason alleged by the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords for rejecting the Bill was lack of time. Lord Lansdowne on 26th August said—

> "I say of this present Bill in particular"—

something had been said about the practice always complained of, and legitimately complained of, by the House of Lords that Bills were sent up too late for their proper and full consideration—

> "that I do not believe you could find any Bill of this great importance having been presented to this House within twenty-four hours of the prorogation."

And again, at the end of his speech he used these words—

> "Therefore, my Lords, if we refuse to read this Bill a second time this evening, I trust it will be understood that we are in reality only doing that which the First Lord of the Admiralty has suggested that we should do, deferring the further consideration of this Bill and its consequences until a more opportune moment."

His reference to the First Lord of the Admiralty pointed to some things that had been said in the course of the debate on the policy of a possible Parliamentary procedure of carrying over a Bill which had been advanced considerably in its stages, or which, at all events, had passed through one House, and resuming consideration of it in another session. It is to gratify this view of Lord Lansdowne, which I admit is a reasonable one, that we reintroduce both of these Bills in the earliest days of this session. I wish to point out that, in carrying out the course now proposed, we are fulfilling the undertaking which I made in this place towards the end of last session, when I announced that the Small Holders Bill would not be further proceeded with. I said then—

> "We abandon the further progress of this Bill with the greatest regret, but the provisions of the Bill which are thus objected to will be reintroduced at an early date, and will be pressed through this House in as speedy a manner as possible, and then we shall invite the other House either honestly to reject those provisions or to pass the Bill with reasonable Amendments consistent with its main purpose and principles."

But I must refer to something else that happened last session. A resolution was adopted, on my motion, by the House of Commons affirming the principle that the power of the other House to alter or reject Bills passed by this House should be so restricted by law as to secure that within the limits of a single Parliament the final decision of the Commons should prevail. I then explained in rough outline the scheme by which we proposed to accomplish this object. Is what I am now doing inconsistent with that scheme? It differs from it in some particulars, naturally. There has been no law passed, but is it in flagrant inconsistence with what we indicated as that which we deemed to be the desirable procedure in the future?

Not at all. The procedure we recommend the House to adopt is in strict accordance with the spirit and intention of that resolution, and with the general scheme which I indicated to the House, whereby effect was to be given to the Resolution. Let me recall the features of that scheme, which are apposite to what we are doing to-day. I said—

> "The Bill, either the same Bill, with or without modifications, or a similar Bill with the same object"—

these are the same Bills—

> "might be reintroduced after a substantial interval, and by a substantial interval I have in my mind a *minimum* of, perhaps, six months."

I do not know whether the six months are quite expired, but I think it will be considered that it is a very convenient period of the session at which we take this action. We are to do this unless in case of great urgency. I said—

> "This Bill would be passed through its various stages, in the House of Commons under limitations of time, limitations of time adapted to the requirements of the case, discussion being restricted as far as possible to the new matter, if, any, introduced. The Bill would then be sent up again so that the other House would have ample opportunity to consider it."

We are, therefore, carrying out to-day an announced and considered policy, and no one can complain that any surprise has been sprung upon them. Our recommendations constitute an innovation. I have already said they do. This is the first time, I believe, in the history of this House that Bills have been a second time sent up to the House of Lords within the compass of a single Parliament. But so was the Resolution passed by this House last year an innovation, and, as I have said, both Houses have had full warning as to the course that would be adopted.

The Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member for Sevenoaks seems to imply that there would have been no occasion for this Resolution had the necessary machinery for regulating the allocation of time been set up. I am in favour of a much more regular proceeding than the ordinary motion which we know as the guillotine motion. So, I believe, is everybody, but I confess that I must have been carried away by a little of the sanguine spirit of youth, for I think that the difficulties in the way of forming a committee of business seem to grow upon one the nearer one comes to it. Therefore, the Government are most anxious to find some solution, and, as a matter of fact, are earnestly engaged in considering the matter. But, be the virtues of such an arrangement what they may, I cannot believe that they would have availed for this particular instance, because this transaction is one, first of all, requiring to be immediately dealt with, and is also one that must be justified by considerations which have never before been submitted to the House, and which, I believe, the House would not be disposed to relegate to any Committee whatever. I think that is a weak argument to use, weak ground to take, against this Resolution, but, weak as it is, it is very much firmer than another argument which might have been used if it had been proposed, in opposing this Resolution, to found a claim for the House of Lords to be able, when it chooses, to put this House to all the trouble and annoyance and sacrifice of useless, dilatory, and superfluous debate on a matter so recently decided. These Bills are to go up to the House of Lords for reconsideration. Why should we waste the time of this House threshing a fresh matter which has been so recently considered by the House? I hold that by this Resolution we are maintaining the dignity and we are saving the time of this House. Under this scheme an opportunity is allowed for moving an Amendment, and an invitation is addressed to the House to reaffirm the opinion it has so unequivocally recorded once at a recent date. This seems to me to be all that is required to meet the circumstances of the case, and I confidently submit the Resolution to the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That in the case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee Stage, and Report Stage of the Bill (including the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the

Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner: (*a*) The Committee Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day; and the Bill shall when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the Whole House without Question put; (*b*) the Report Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) and the Committee Stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House, and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put; (*c*) if the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report Stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on a third allotted day. After this Order comes into operation, any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m., and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to a conclusion) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee Stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business to be brought to a conclusion are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this order shall—(*a*) prevent any business which under this order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day being allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of (King's Recommendation of the payment of any Salaries, Compensation, and other Expenses that may be incurred in pursuance of any Act of the present session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, and of the payment of an Annual Grant for the purposes of such Act, signified)."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): There was one part of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in explaining his Motion in which, I think, he really tried to convince us on a matter which I, at all events, require no persuasion. I do not regard this Motion with any feeling of surprise; I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman that he has indicated before that he proposed to proceed by some such Motion as this, and I fully anticipated not the extreme length of the Resolution which you, Sir, have just laboured through from the chair, but that some Resolution of the kind would be proposed by the right hon. Gentleman early in the session. That caused no surprise. One part of his speech, I think, did cause surprise, and it was that in which he explained to the House that he thought the House of Lords was perfectly justified, considering the time at which an important measure was sent up, in declining to proceed with it in the course of last session. I am glad to hear that admission from the right hon. Gentleman, but I find it very hard to reconcile with the innumerable speeches made by himself and by his friends in the course of the autumn and winter campaign. I remember making a rough calculation that some Member of that distinguished Bench had spoken, on an average, every three days during the autumn campaign in Scotland upon the subject of these two Bills. Every speaker dwelt rather on the demerits of the House of Lords than on the merits of the Bill; and every speaker, so far as I remember, put in the very forefront of his indictment against the House of Lords the fact that they had rejected these Bills. It is gratifying to learn after all this enormous expenditure—I had almost said waste—of eloquence and argument, that the Prime Minister himself comes down and tells us to-day that, taking all the circumstances of the last session into account, he cannot deny that the Lords were thoroughly justified in declining to discuss these very important questions towards the latter end of August. We do not always agree on the subject of the House of Lords, but I imagine that on this particular occasion, and in this particular controversy, the Prime Minister and myself are entirely at one. The right hon. Gentleman has not anticipated in his speech the sort of objection which I feel disposed to take, as far as I am concerned, to the Resolution he has brought before us. There are two aspects of that Resolution—one strictly concerned with procedure, the other pointing to those larger issues of policy to which the right hon. Gentleman referred in the closing portion of his speech. I may, perhaps, say a word before I sit down upon this latter aspect, but I may be permitted to begin with that which, I think, is the more important point, at all events, the more strictly relevant point, in this discussion. He tells us that he has initiated to-day for the first time a new experiment in our sessional orders. I think that is quite true, but, frankly, and for my own part, I think some of his other experiments have been greater violations of Parliamentary tradition and practice than the one he asks us to debate to-night. At all events, this I think clear, that the House of Lords has no ground to complain of the step which the right hon. Gentleman wishes us to take on the present occasion. The House of Lords has on various occasions during the last half century urged this House to adopt some method of what is called "carrying over," by which a Bill which is not adequately discussed in the course of one session may be resumed in the course of the next, and time may thus be given to both Houses of Parliament adequate to the various clauses. That has been the request of the House of Lords formally made to this House, sometimes in one shape and sometimes in another by very strong and important Committees of that House, but, so far, never adopted by this House. And so far as the House of Lords is concerned, I think that the precedent which the right hon. Gentleman has set to-day is a good one, because the House of Lords clearly will always be justified, when they have not time at the end of the session, in saying: "This is not a Bill which we have time to discuss adequately during the few days left to us. If the House of Commons can show that there are no inconveniences inflicted upon them by the rejection of the Bill, they can get through all its stages at the cost of a few hours debate at the beginning of the next session, and thus give us time really to debate in detail the very important measure which they have sent up to us." So far the right hon. Gentleman is carrying out the request of the House of Lords which his predecessors have always refused to carry out. And therefore quite frankly, and as far as the relations between the two Houses are concerned, I think the right hon. Gentleman has made a new departure which must in the future give the House of Lords an opportunity of dealing in detail with the measures sent to it by this House which it has never sufficiently enjoyed in the past. The right hon. Gentleman is quite right in saying that not under one Government alone, but under more than one Government, Bills have, owing to the exigencies of debate in this House, been sent up to the House of Lords too late. Everybody admits it. It happened in the time of the late Government; it has happened still more in the time of the present Government. The successive Governments are not really responsible for that. It is the procedure of this House which makes it impossible very often to finish a great Bill before the second week in August—before a period when it really is unreasonable to ask either House of Legislature, dealing with great complicated and controversial details, to deal with any measure sent to them. Therefore, I am glad from the point of view of the House of Lords, at all events, and the discussion of our measures by the House of Lords, that the right hon. Gentleman has devised a plan which is applicable, of course, to other Bills as well as to this one, by which, without any undue labours being thrown upon this House, the other House may be able to deal at length and adequately with any proposals sent up to it. Well, my objection, therefore, from the point of view of procedure has nothing whatever to do with the relation between the two Houses. It has simply to do with the procedure of this House. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has fresh in his mind the Reports of the various Committees which sat upon this and on cognate subjects during the last fifty years. I was myself a member of a Committee which sat in 1890 upon this very question of carrying over, which this is in effect, and I was myself the draftsman of the report which that Committee finally adopted. But the object that the majority of that Committee had in view was that Bills brought into this House should be thoroughly discussed in this House, even at the cost of extending the discussions on them into a second session. I am not pressing on the Government that they should accept the Report of that Committee as it stands. Many things have happened in regard to the procedure of this House since the year 1890; but still the broad problem which that Committee attempted to deal with remains unsolved, and we have not found a method by which Bills can be adequately discussed in this House before they are sent up to the other House. Now what was the objection taken by an important minority to the plan that we proposed? We proposed that Bills should be carried over. "No," said the minority, led by Mr. Gladstone, supported by Sir William Harcourt, and containing a large number of men of light and leading at that time constituting the Opposition; "No," they said, "it will be a great disadvantage to carry over from one session to another," and the first reason they gave against that proceeding was that no Government ever brought in Bills a second time without having, through discussion in this House and the country, seen reason to modify and improve proposals that they made on the first occasion. So that here you have two alternative plans discussed by the last Committee which sat on this question. There was the plan which we favoured on this side, which undoubtedly gave full opportunity to this House to discuss all the proposals brought before it. You had the objection raised by Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt that, whatever merits there might be in that scheme, it had the enormous demerit that the Government bringing in the Bill would not have that opportunity of revising it, recasting it, and remodelling it which the necessity of bringing in a new Bill would throw upon them. Well, I think there was force in that argument, as there certainly was force in the argument used on the other side. What is the argument of the right hon. Gentleman? He has set himself to work, and he has found a plan which combines the disadvantages of both schemes and the advantages of neither. He has devised a plan by which the House is never allowed fully to discuss a Bill, and a plan which prevents the Government from remodelling a Bill when they bring it in a second time—a plan equally repugnant to the argument used by the majority and the minority of the Committee of 1890. If the right hon. Gentleman thinks I am painting in too dark colours the plan he has adopted let me just ask the House to recall how much discussion there was upon the Small Holdings Bill last session. The right hon. Gentleman has given a list of the days spent either in the House or Grand Committee, and says that a great deal of time was spent either in the House or in the Grand Committee. I never will admit that this procedure in Grand Committee is the equivalent, though it may, under appropriate circumstances, be a substitute, for debate in the whole House. They are not the same thing, and nothing will make them so. I do not quarrel with the principle contained in the hint thrown out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he said he favoured a plan by which the uncontroversial parts of a Bill might be sent to a Grand Committee; but that was not the plan adopted by the Government last session with reference to the Small Holdings Bill. That Bill, be it a good or a bad Bill, at all events deals in a very drastic manner with the whole system of landed property in Scotland, whether the property of the owners or of the cultivators of the soil. It attacks or modifies profoundly the whole system under which landed property in Scotland is now held whether by owners or occupiers; its importance is prodigious, its controversial character has never been denied. That Bill never was discussed for a day in Committee of the Whole House, and it is perfectly absurd to say that opportunity for discussion was given to so many men so well qualified to speak upon it. I turn from that fundamental and initial objection to the whole procedure on the Bill. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that discussion upstairs is equivalent to discussion in the whole House, and that we may take the Grand Committee as a true microcosm of the House of Commons, how much of the Bill was discussed? I have here a copy of the Bill, with all the clauses marked which were passed without discussion under the closure moved by the Minister in charge. I do not argue whether or not the closure was justified; but what I do argue and what is undeniable is that, as the result of the closure, the great principles in this Bill were not discussed, even in the imperfect manner in which a Grand Committee admits of discussion. The right hon. Gentleman told us just now that one of the cardinal principles of the Bill was the erection of a tribunal for fixing rent. That tribunal was not discussed, except in so far as salaries were concerned. It was not discussed in Grand Committee at all—the cardinal principles of the Bill was never discussed, unless you call it the cardinal principle that somebody's salary should be raised from £1,000 to £1,200 a year. Next to the constitution of the tribunal I should have thought that the method of dealing with the existing owner and occupier of land in Scotland, and of constituting new holdings would have been, at all events, a subject which the Grand Committee might have had an opportunity of discussing. They did not have that opportunity, and surely it is ludicrous for the right hon. Gentleman to come down and tell us that, as this Bill has been thoroughly discussed in the course of last session, we should be wasting our time if we were to devote any more of our valuable leisure to debating it, and that all we can do is to send it up at once by this novel and summary process to the other House. With regard to the other Bill which is unequally yoked with the Small Holdings Bill in this Resolution, that was not closured in Grand Committee. So far as Grand Committee was concerned, I daresay the discussion was adequate. Not having been a member of the Committee, I am not qualified to speak; but I well remember that when it came down to this House and we got the opportunity, for the first time, of dealing with the details of the measure, we were kept up till four in the morning by the two learned Gentlemen in charge of the Bill, and had to discuss it in circumstances in which, as everybody knows, rational discussion is almost an impossibility. Now what does the right hon. Gentleman say in answer to that? He says the House was well acquainted with the Bills, for one was brought in July, 1906, and as for the other, two Bills something like it, have been discussed on some private Member's Friday, in the course of the preceding Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman is laughing at us. That is the kind of argument which may impose on persons outside the House who know nothing of its procedure; but to say it without a smile on his countenance to Gentlemen well acquainted with the proceedings of the House was really to ask them to accept courteously a travesty of Parliamentary argument, which is, I think, hardly worthy of the right hon. Gentleman. He knows as well as anybody else that when a great and far-reaching measure, dealing in a revolutionary spirit with long-established principles, is brought into this House, it is never taken seriously by the House until it is taken in charge by the Government of the day, and not even then until the Government of the day gives adequate time for discussion. That time never has been given by the Government of the day. The right hon. Gentleman knows very well that these private Members' discussions on Friday never have been, and never are, seriously taken [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh"] as more than a general expression of opinion that something in the direction of the Bill ought to be considered by those responsible for guiding legislation. The Government will not have carrying over which would give us an opportunity for full discussion, and they have not yet produced any alternative plan by which full discussion can be obtained. They always tell us that they are anxiously looking out for a plan. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the closer he approached the problem, the more difficult it appeared to be—as he neared the fence, the more difficult it appeared to be to get over it. What has he done? He has adopted a plan which has the evils of every other plan, which does not ensure full debate, and does not give Ministers an opportunity of revising their Bills. Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt said, with reference to our proposals for carrying over—

> "The great advantage would be lost, as pointed out by the Committee of 1851, of altering in a new session the freedom and scope of a measure. There are few Bills of the first importance which, after full discussion and with a more complete knowledge of the sentiment of the House and the country, could not with advantage be recast."

Well, that is the view of such experienced legislators as Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt. They have been followed by successors more successful in the drafting of Bills, happier in their power of grasping public opinion, more careful in their method of drafting—gentlemen whose powers of prevision are such that they can forecast all objections, although they may have taken care that those objections should never be reached in this House, and who, no doubt, if an opportunity had by accident been given to us for urging objections, would have found an answer so adequate, so complete, that they would be absolutely justified in bringing in a Bill a second time in its old form, with not even a comma altered. Happy is the right hon. Gentleman in having colleagues whose legislative capacity so far transcends anything that Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt found possible. It is somewhat astonishing, however, that these two Bills, with their innate perfection, so absolutely free from any taint of original sin, are the two Bills on which more especially the Government themselves happen to be divided, and have publicly expressed their opinion. We know perfectly well, as far as the Valuation Bill is concerned, that the policy which the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer look forward to founding on that Bill is fundamentally and totally different from the policy of the Solicitor-General for Scotland. We know so far as the Small Holdings Bill for Scotland is concerned that one of the colleagues of the right hon. Gentleman has expressed his regret that the cardinal principles of this Bill have been adopted; he would have liked to see quite a different set of cardinal principles adopted, viz., those which are embodied in the English Bill, on the success of which the right hon. Gentleman is already congratulating himself. With every respect to the capacity of the Scottish officers, when I find them claiming infallibility and waving that infallible flag in the face of their own colleagues, I think the right hon. Gentleman would have been not ill-advised if he had carried out Mr. Gladstone's suggestion, and taken advantage of such criticism—small enough—as was permitted in this House and as was given under freer circumstances in the country. It is upon these considerations that I base chiefly my objection to this proposal. If we had been allowed fully to discuss the measure last session, if we had sent it up too late to the House of Lords for them to discuss it, and if the House of Lords had objected on that ground, I should have thought the method proposed for carrying over the Bill had something to be said for it; but when we are asked to pass in this manner a Bill of which the main provisions never were discussed in this House or in the Grand Committee, I can only say that the novelty of the procedure with regard to a Bill which comes to us in a new session, under these auspices and with these antecedents, is only of a piece with all the other ingenious methods by which the right hon. Gentleman has been dealing with the ancient liberties of this House, which he admits to be regrettable and even deplorable. He desires to find a remedy, and frankly tells us that he has no remedy in view, and such visions of a remedy as he entertained last session seem to be vanishing in the dim and hazy distance. That is my main objection to this Resolution as a matter of procedure. The right hon. Gentleman referred at the end of his speech to another and a larger question. He has told us that this is part of his plan for dealing with the House of Lords, and a kind of instalment of that method by which he desires to reduce to impotence the other branch of the Legislature. We all know perfectly well that this is part of the plan of filling up the cup. It was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others that they were going to pursue this course, and they have never denied pursuing this course, in order to get a case against the House of Lords. I have only two observations to make on that. One is that the occupiers and owners of land in Scotland and the ratepayers of Scotland ought not to be made pawns in this game which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to play against the House of Lords. I think when you are dealing with interests as great as those affected by these measures you ought to try to bring in measures which are intended to pass, and not measures which are obviously intended not to pass. It is perfectly clear from the whole action of the Government in regard to this Bill that they are not now trying to improve the lot of any class in Scotland—owners, occupiers or ratepayers. Nothing would disappoint them so much as seeing their measure become law. Is that an uncharitable statement? Have you not proofs of its accuracy writ large in the last additions made to the Statute-book last session? We know what the principles of the Government are with regard to small holdings for the greater part of this island; we know what their principles are with regard to Ireland, because we have an eloquent speech in favour of peasant proprietors whenever the Chief Secretary for Ireland addresses us upon law and order in that country. We know, therefore, their views are diametrically opposite to the principles embodied in this Bill. The inference is obvious. This Bill is not intended to carry out a legislative policy; it is intended to be part of an attack upon the other House of Parliament. I think that very unprincipled; I also think it very inept. These constitutional revolutions are not as easy as the Prime Minister appears to suppose. Any party who mean to carry them out must take a little more pains in the methods they adopt and use those methods at a more fortunate moment for themselves. You will never get up genuine enthusiasm for Bills so preposterous in their framework as these two measures. I do not deny that at this moment Scottish Members opposite represent by far the larger number of Scottish constituencies, and that they would naturally look with a favourable eye upon any legislative proposal brought forward by their own Government, especially when they are told it is going to further some ulterior political object such as that of which the right hon. Gentleman has spoken with such candour to-night. But the Bills, apart from that, excite no enthusiasm in Scotland. Your measures for the purpose for which you have adopted them are bad. They are particularly bad as Bills. They are bad as machinery for getting up public enthusiasm against the House of Lords. Even if they were much better—even if they were masterly performances, which we should suppose by the manner in which they are brought in, without the alteration of a single comma, the Prime Minister thinks them, and even if they were as good as some of the Prime Minister's colleagues think them bad, I venture to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he and his Government are now in no condition to carry out these great revolutions. I do not now and I have never attached undue importance to by-elections. I do not now and I never have, whether they were against the Party of which I am a member or in favour of it, and I think it is quite possible to exaggerate their significance. At all events I do not build on them more than this, that a Government which has had the experience which the right hon. Gentleman's has recently had may have it in its power to do a great deal of legislative work, but it is not in a condition to carry out a great revolution. The huge battalions opposite may be diminished only by a unit or two here and there, but you cannot carry out revolutions unless you have something more behind you, and that something the right hon. Gentleman has lost, never to be regained. I am not, of course, forecasting the destinies of the great Party of which he is the leader; I am speaking of this Parliament, and this Parliament has already lost the power to carry through great revolutionary methods. That power has gone, and will never be recovered. So far as this Resolution relates to procedure I have stated my objections to it; so far as it is a part of that larger campaign which the right hon. Gentleman is directing against the other House I say that it will not only fail, but that everybody knows it will fail, that its failure is writ large and already its doom is sealed and that that part of the programme of the right hon. Gentleman he had better abandon as quickly and with as much dignity as he can.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The right hon. Gentleman has been betrayed in the stress of his peroration into rhetorical audacities some of which I think, after sober reflection, he will a little regret; yet his speech as a whole contained so many valuable admissions, so few serious criticisms of the Resolution of my right hon. friend, that I think I ought really to be rather grateful for the admissions than disposed to deal in any very grave spirit with the criticisms. But in view of his concluding remarks I must repudiate in the clearest and most emphatic terms, not only on behalf of the Prime Minister but on behalf of the whole Party who sit on these benches, the character which the right hon. Gentleman has thought it worthy and becoming to attribute to us—that we are playing the part of gross, almost avowed, political hypocrites, pretending to have the interests of the Scottish agricultural population at heart; that we are really like unscrupulous gamesters staking trust money for the purpose of gaining some private ends of our own. That is not a representation which it is becoming of the right hon. Gentleman to make of his political opponents, and it is not one which will awaken any response in any part of the kingdom. When he tells us that by some secret process of divination he knows that the people of Scotland do not care for this legislation, I venture to tell him, with all respect to him as a most distinguished Scotsman, that I go elsewhere if I want to find an authentic organ of public opinion. I go to the representatives of the Scottish people, and when I find that by an overwhelming majority, and without any change of opinion this year as compared with last, they are in favour and have the strongest desire for both these measures, we have the strongest reason for believing that we have the opinion of the people of Scotland behind us. Now let me go further and deal with the more serious part of the right hon. Gentleman's argument. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the Motion did not come upon him as a surprise, but on the contrary it was the result of distinct and definite pledges which my right hon. friend the Prime Minister gave to the House and the country last year—an admission I gladly note. He told us further, that so far from regarding the Motion as disrespectful, he considers it convenient, and even deferential, to the House of Lords. I am not sure that it was entirely conceived in that sense, but we are very glad to find it possesses that virtue in addition to many others. What really is the right hon. Gentleman's criticism? He tells us this proposal embodies in a particular case—I shall say a word or two in a moment as to the case itself—the principle of what used to be called carrying over—a principle of which he says he has long been an advocate—although I do not remember, by the way, that he has done much to carry it to fruition, but which was denounced and repudiated by two such great Parliamentary authorities as Mr. Gladstone and Sir W. Harcourt. What was the ground that Mr. Gladstone took in objecting to carrying over? It was the ground, first, that public opinion in the country might have shown a change of direction, and, secondly, that it would preclude the House of Commons from reconsidering in the light of fresh sources of information the precise form in which legislation was sent to the other House. If those are arguments against carrying over, neither of them applies to this Motion. This is not carrying over. On the contrary, it proposes to give to the House the opportunity upon a Second Reading debate of declaring whether or not they, as representing the opinion of the country, are still in favour of the principles of both these measures. I was rather amused to hear the right hon. Gentleman's arguments against cast-iron legislation. When I cast my memory back, as some of us can, to the proceedings of the last Parliament, and when I remember the Education Act of the right hon. Gentleman—I am speaking of the Bill of 1899, which was spoken of as if it were inspired and of which we were not allowed to alter so much as a comma, and which, after being sent to the House of Lords, was passed into law—you have not only here an opportunity of a Second Reading, and therefore the means of saying whether the House of Commons, as representing the country, is of the same opinion or not, but we are also giving the House the Commitee Stage in which reasonable Amendments may be brought forward which will receive the respectful consideration of the Government. So that whatever objections there may be to the principles of carrying over, whatever arguments Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt used against carrying over, they have no application whatever to the present Resolution. What does the right hon. Gentleman's argument come to? Analysed and sifted it is reduced to one single point, namely, whether or not during last session these Bills did or not receive adequate discussion. Upon that point I join issue with him. I take the Scottish Land Bill. No one suggests that it did not receive mature and adequate discussion on Second Reading. It is true it was sent to a Standing Committee, and that, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, was a nefarious proceeding, because the Bill contained a number of controversial proposals. Why was it sent? Because it was a Scottish measure dealing entirely and exclusively with Scottish interests, and the only way of bringing to bear in detail the expert and the conjoint opinion of the representatives of the people of Scotland was to send it to a Committee on which every one of the Members for Scotland could sit. It is true that there was a small knot of English Members on the Committee. I attended one day part of the day.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): For half an hour.

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, and that half-hour was quite enough to give a good sample of the way the Committee spent its time. I do not believe there is anybody who sat on that Committee—I see the hon. Baronet the Member for London is in his place. I do not know whether he was a member of the Committee or not, but I am quite sure that if he was he was a most assiduous attendant.

SIR F. BANBURY: I did not miss a day.

MR. ASQUITH: But I will say that if by some chance or mischance some of the English Members had removed themselves the Bill would have taken about half the time in Committee that it did. I am not saying anything invidious as to the value of the contributions they made; I am simply stating a plain matter of fact. The right hon. Gentleman has said, and I was astounded to hear him—because he, like myself, was not present at the proceedings of the Committee—that not a single one of the main pivotal principles of the Bill was ever discussed adequately in that Committee. I can only say that, in the opinion of the Secretary for Scotland, who is in charge of the Bill, and I think I may say the great bulk of the Scottish Members, there was not a single cardinal principle that was not discussed and divided upon. The right hon. Gentleman gave us an illustration in the question of the Land Court, but if I am right, the question not of the composition of such a Court, but whether there should or should not be a Land Court was discussed and divided upon by the Committee.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: What does a Committee exist for but to discuss details?

Mr. ASQUITH: The right hon. Gentleman asks what a Committee is for but to discuss details. The whole point of his charge is that there was no time to discuss the principles.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman unintentionally misrepresents me. What I complain of is that the cardinal principles which ought to have been discussed in detail were not discussed in detail at all.

Mr. ASQUITH: The facts speak for themselves. For about three months the Bill was in Committee upstairs, then it was three nights here in the House on Report, and there was a debate again on Third Reading, and I say it is idle, under modern conditions, to speak of any measure which has passed through that ordeal as if it was a measure which did not represent the considered and mature judgment of the House. The Valuation Bill was a very complicated measure. It went through the Standing Committee in so business-like a spirit that the closure was not once moved, and I never heard anybody until to-day say the details were not adequately threshed out. The subject had been before the House on three or four occasions, we had debates on Second Reading, session after session, in which not the "irresponsible faddists," but the greatest authorities representing all the different sections of the House took part. It is idle, therefore, to say that the measure was sprung by the Government on the House for the first time when the Government introduced it last year. On the pure question on tactics, therefore, which is the only question remaining when the right hon. Gentleman's indictment is analysed, I say that both these Bills last session were amply and adequately discussed, and that the additional facilities which the Government are affording in this Resolution for their further discussion now are quite enough for any legitimate purpose.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said whatever might be said by Members of the front Opposition Bench those who sat on the back benches ought to enter a very strong protest against the new procedure introduced by this Resolution. Everyone desired to do away with guillotine Motions, but whenever a new one had been proposed the Opposition had been faced with the *tu quoque* argument that whatever the Government was doing their predecessors had done the same thing. This Resolution, however, was not supported by any precedent; it was an entirely novel proceeding and anybody who looked at the Paper must admit that the Resolution was one that absolutely destroyed the legislative character of the House of Commons. The Resolution was a means of putting before the House certain Bills, and at the same time of withdrawing from the House any opportunity of deliberately discussing them. To give them the limited time of two days was not fair, having regard to the consideration which should be given to any Bill, even if it had been considered to the fullest extent in the past. He desired to enter the very strongest protest at the first opportunity against such a precedent having been made. It was remarkable that almost the first business the House had to transact was to pass a more stringent form of guillotine than anything they had had before, although the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, on the debate on the Address, when he was taxed as to measures being carried without adequate discussion—

> "We shall try by some common agreement to arrive at a better method of disposing of our work";

and ended up by saying—

> "We ought to find ample opportunities to discuss our extensive programme. At any rate, we are going to make the attempt."

Was this the attempt to give them adequate discussion for that large programme which was put forward, when two Bills were going to be passed in four days? Was this the sort of spirit in which it was likely the Government could call upon those who were opposed to them to come to some mutual workable agreement as to the conduct of business? He confessed it did not look as if they were going to have any such reasonable proposal in regard to procedure as he had hoped might be arrived at, so as to avoid constant appeals to the House to pass guillotine Resolutions. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the ample discussion given to the Bills of last year, and had said the facts spoke for themselves. The unfortunate thing was that they could not refer to the facts. There was no official report to which they could turn and know what went on in Committee. He would have thought every Scottish Member of Parliament could very well have taken part if they had had these Bills in Committee of the Whole House. They had undoubtedly a special prerogative last year in connection with the Scottish Committee, a privilege not extended to English Members when dealing with a similar Bill early last session. But there were questions in that Bill which required very careful consideration at the hands of English Members. There was the great question of the dividing up of the Board of Agriculture. They had in this session had the suggestion that the Board of Agriculture should be given a higher *status* and elevated to the rank of the older offices of the Crown. Would it be as important a body if it had the whole of Scotland separated from it? Would the country only in the last few days have been altogether satisfied if, when that sudden outbreak of contagious disease happened at Edinburgh, they had known there were two State departments interested in agriculture instead of only one, and that instead of being able to go straight to one Board of Agriculture in England, any matter which affected both countries would have to depend upon the procedure and policy of another office in Scotland. This question was of vast importance, and yet it was never discussed in the House at all by those really interested in the matter. It might have been discussed upstairs, but on Report the special provision in regard to the Board of Agriculture never received full discussion. Therefore, he did not think if they took merely that particular instance it could be said that it was fair that English Members should be shut out from the discussion, or that the Bill had been fully discussed at the hands of the House of Commons. The Prime Minister had said the chief principles of the Bill were the land court and fixity of tenure. It seemed rather a curious thing that only a very few months before this Bill the Government were dealing with the question of agricultural holdings, and they passed an Act which dealt with land tenure for agricultural holdings, and yet they did not say the chief features of agricultural tenure in Scotland were a land court and fixity of tenure. It was only subsequently that they found these principles were to be the chief features of the Bill. The Prime Minister had spoken of the increasing popularity of the Bill in Scotland, but could not bring any proof of it save that the English Bill had proved popular. If the method adopted in the English Bill had proved popular he would have thought that supported the action of the House of Lords in wishing to extend it to Scotland. He remembered last year when the guillotine Resolution was passed in connection with the Land Bill, the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the closure had only been asked for fifty-three times in the Grand Committee and only given fifty times—an average of one to two-and-a-half or three hours discussion. A Bill which had been closured fifty times in Grand Committee was in a very exceptional position. They had been told that the Land Values Bill and the English Bill passed without a single closure, and that neither under the old nor the new procedure had he ever put the closure on any

Bill before him in Grand Committees. When one knew what was the usual experience in Grand Committees, to say that a Bill had not been closured in the most extraordinary way seemed to be carrying the argument a little too far. The Land Values Bill had been read a first time under the ten minutes rule early in the session, and read a second time in the middle of July. It went to the Grand Committee late in July, and came up for Report and Third Reading on 8th August. That could hardly be said to have been a satisfactory discussion on a Bill, the importance of which now they perhaps rather minimised, but the importance of which at all events to English Members was very great. They had always been told that if the principle of the Bill was accepted in Scotland, it was to be made a precedent for action of a similar character in England. When they had had before them the difficulties in connection with this matter, Members not representing Scotland must take a deep interest in this Bill, and must feel satisfied that, coming from a Governmental source, and not from a private Member, it had not received adequate discussion at the hands of Members not connected with Scotland. Both these Bills were forced through the House, perhaps for certain reasons, under circumstances which placed a great number of Members under great disadvantage in the discussion, and therefore when they came forward again, whether they were in the same words or not, they should certainly receive a great deal more discussion than they would get under this Resolution. It was all very well for the Government to say they had done this to give the House of Lords full opportunity of discussion, but they could not forget that when an appeal was made from below the gangway last year to the Prime Minister to pass one portion of the Agricultural Holdings Bill which was thought to be desirable and necessary, they were told they were not to have that which was beneficial to their constituents, because it was not tactics. That was at the bottom of the whole thing. The Government wanted something to found their campaign upon. Surely that remark vitiated everything that could now be put forward in connection with these two particular measures. He thought they were bound to protest and that the protests ought to come from those who were entirely unconnected with official life. It was those Members who had no official position whose rights and privileges were most attacked by Resolutions of this sort. It was high time that they declined to add precedent upon precedent in connection with this particular form of procedure which was distasteful to every Member of the House, and it was for that reason that he raised his solemn protest against it.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that with respect to one of the Bills dealt with in this Resolution he was of opinion that no reason was advanced in response to objections made to the vital principles of the Bill, whereas in the case of the other Bill the objections were fairly and squarely met. He had seen too many years of time wasted in the House to be very particular as to the means taken to shorten unnecessary discussion, and so far as the prososals now being made were concerned they would have his support. Nevertheless, he had his doubts as to whether they would further the passing of legislation, but the Government were the best judges in their own case, and he would support their Resolution. He did not think sufficient distinction had been drawn between the two Bills or between the manner in which they were to be discussed. In the case of the Land Values Bill it was carried without the closure, and the objections raised were fairly and squarely met after full discusson. Many important Amendments were freely accepted by the Lord Advocate, and they would have to be tested by experience before any actual change was made in the law of rating. He thought the Opposition were making a vast mistake in regard to this question of the readjustment of the incidence of local taxation, or even the re-allocation of revenue from building values. It would not be for ever that those would reap who had not sown in regard to land values. The Opposition had no alternative scheme and they had already exhausted their powers of initiative in the Agricultural Relief Rating Act. With regard to the other Bill he did not blame the

House of Lords for refusing to consider it on the last day of the session, and the reasonable business course for the House of Commons to take now was to send it back to the Upper Chamber with as little delay as possible. In the House of Commons they had had their full say upon it, and it was a serious proposal. Although no doubt it might be improved, yet it contained an essential element in any effective policy. As to the Scottish Small Landholders Bill the situation was different. If there was any hope of altering it it would be worth while opposing the closure, but he did not think there was any such hope. It had been suggested that this Bill had been brought up as part of a strategical movement against the other House. He had never suggested that himself, but if any foundation could be found for such a statement it was evident that there had been a missfire, because this particular Bill would rehabilitate a second Chamber and in fact create a *raison d'être* for a separate Chamber. The need for land reform was a serious reality, but this Bill, with singular perversity, missed the evils which ought to be remedied and detroyed the good which had already been achieved. He was now advancing reasons why no time should be wasted on this particular Bill, and he suggested that another day should be given to the Land Values Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that it was merely a question of method between the English Bill and the Scottish Bill, but to his mind it was a question of vital principles. But those principles having been accepted by the Government and the House he could not see the object of wasting time over the application of the methods of applying those principles. The Chancellor of the Exchequer talked of methods, but was the importation into Scotland of dual ownership and the abolition of responsible management merely a matter of method? Was the abolition of the economic standard of rent a matter of method? To his mind they were vital principles. No doubt the Secretary for Scotland had made conflicting statements upon this point, but they were nevertheless all points of first magnitude, on which it was hopeless to expect that there could be any way found for adequate discussion on the Closure Resolution. If the House and the Government accepted those pernicious principles then it was a matter of perfect indifference as to the particular way in which they were introduced into Scotland. Those being the real issues, he did not think they needed to waste any more time upon the details. He claimed to know something of the people living on the country side of Scotland, and he might state that he had never met anyone whose opinion was worth having who believed in this Bill. The Solicitor-General had stated that the opposition to the Bill was due to class ignorance.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. Ure, Linlithgowshire): No.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON said he had read a statement to that effect. He knew of his own shortcomings and he was aware that there was ignorance, and that he was among the ignorant, but he had such knowledge of the land and the people to feel impelled to back his policy either wholly or in part against the policy of the Government. He was not so sure that he had as good a right to speak for the urban population, for if anyone had been returned to the House by the landless it was himself, and it was on behalf of the landless that he had given his opposition to this Bill and his support to alternative proposals. The real way to promote land reform at the present time was not to wrangle over the details of a dead Bill but to perfect a true and effective policy. They all wanted to see more people brought back to the land. They had before them the inquiries which had been held, including the independent inquiry into the working of the Crofters Acts and their applicability to the rest of the country. He would take one day off the time to be allotted for the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and give it to the Land Values (Scotland) Bill because the chances of that Bill were unnecessarily but gravely imperilled. The true starting point for the reform of land values was the Report of Lord Balfour's Commission. He thought the Lord Advocate attached considerable weight to that Report, but he did not know what weight was attached to the Report of the inquiry into the working of the Crofters Acts. Nor did he know how the Government allowed so long a spin to that March hare—the breaking of feu-contracts. A great many innocent people had suffered from that proposal, and that had really prejudiced the cause of this Bill.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester) thought the House might discuss this question on broader grounds than that taken by the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs. The question was really one of Parliamentary procedure, and it was a mere incident in the discussion that the proposal submitted by the Prime Minister referred to two Scottish Bills. From the point of view of the minority section of the House they must always approach such proposals as the Government had made that afternoon with a great deal of suspicion. The minority must not lightly allow freedom of discussion to be taken away by any guillotine Resolution under any excuse whatever. The question which they had seriously to discuss was whether this was a guillotine Resolution which deprived the minority of the right of free discussion. If it was, the Labour Party in the House was not going to give the Government any support, but rather active opposition in the attempt to carry the Resolution. If it was not, the Labour Party was prepared to consider the proposition on its own merits. Since the Labour Members came into the House nothing had struck them more than the desire to discuss, to rediscuss, and to re-rediscuss every proposal, Bill, or Amendment, brought under the notice of the House. When adequate discussion had taken place they were told that the privileges of Members of the House necessitated discussion again. Jealous as the Labour Members were of the rights of minorities in the House, they were not going to subscribe to that absurd proposition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London divided his speech into two parts. In the first part he complained that the Government were in too great haste, and in the second part that they were not hasty enough. The right hon. Gentleman stated that although the Small Landholders Bill was before the Standing Committee twenty-two days, the cardinal principle dealing with the land court was not even discussed. Surely that was a very serious reflection on the Members of the Standing Committee. Although he was not a Member of the Committee he knew from reports which had leaked out how the time was consumed. They were told who had made many speeches and who had repeated their speeches. He was, therefore, not in the least influenced by the statement that although the Committee sat twenty-two days the cardinal principles were never discussed at all. That was the fault absolutely of the Committee. The Bill was intricate; it contained very important proposals, and it sought to establish important principles, but there was not a single business Member of the House who would not say that in the course of twenty-two sittings—some of which were prolonged—there was not adequate time to discuss those important principles. Supposing there was much more in the argument than there actually was, what guarantee had they that if the Government had introduced the Bill in the ordinary way and asked a Second Reading under the ordinary rules of the House, it would be more adequately discussed this session than last? What was the use of asking them to spend twenty-eight days of the precious time of this session in discussing the Bill, and then to be told after the whole process had been gone through that the cardinal principles of the Bill had never even been considered by the Members of the Committee? If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London had given a guarantee that afternoon that if the Bill had been introduced under the ordinary rules of the House, and that the cardinal principles would have been adequately discussed and settled within twenty-two sittings, the Opposition would have been giving the Government an adequate offer why the guillotine proposal should not be carried. They all recognised that the business machinery of the House was not quite so good as they would like it to be. They had an experience last session which they were not going to repeat at the end of this session. The right hon. Gentleman's proposal was that twenty-two days should be given to the Committee stage, three days to the Report stage, and three days to the Third Reading stage. Why should they waste twenty-eight days in coming to precisely the same decisions as were arrived at last session? They saw no reason during the past few months for changing their decisions, and therefore they should go on as fast as possible with the other business which would be brought before them in due course. There was a great deal in the argument that this guillotine Resolution would be taken as a precedent to justify the rejection of Bills in another place if they were sent up after a certain date. The Labour Party had no objection to the other place taking that course. When they did take that course the Labour Members would make the same speeches about them in the country as they made during the recent recess, and the same result would take place. The result had been that the Labour Party candidates at the by-elections had enormously increased their votes and come much nearer to winning elections than ever before. If there were any outstanding difficulties that were to be brought to a head by this procedure on the part of the Government the sooner they were brought to a head the better. The Labour Party would be only too delighted to assist the Government in bringing these difficulties to a head. They supported the Resolution for two main reasons. In the first place it was not an attempt on the part of the Government to protect itself against free discussion, but it was an attempt made to protect the House against another place. This Resolution did not raise the question of the limitation of free discussion; it simply protected this House against the inducements the other place might have to compel it to waste its time session after session upon Bills which the other place would not accept. The second reason was that this was a step forward in the readjustment of the Standing Orders which would enable the House to use the work done in previous sessions. As to the best scheme for carrying that out it would not become him to enter on that question at all. If the Government had made up its mind that the Bill did not require redrafting it was perfectly entitled to say so to the House, and it had a right to say that it would carry the Bill through its remaining stages in the way proposed so that the other place might continue the studies which were so rudely interrupted by the shooting season which unfortunately opened about the middle of August. Therefore, because this was a defence of this House against another place, and because they took this as the first step towards a business-like and working arrangement for carrying over the work of one session which remained uncompleted to the next session, the Party with whom he was associated would give it their most hearty support.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said that the hon. Member for Leicester had shown quite clearly that the real object of the procedure embodied in the Prime Minister's Resolution was to strike at the other place. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were, however, most indignant when it was suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition that that was really the object. He thought that no clearer condemnation of this Motion could have been made than that which came from the hon. Member for Leigh Burghs, who said that the Bill was so bad that the sooner it got to the House of Lords and was there done away with the better, because no amount of time spent upon it could by any possibility amend it. That was one view to take of the Bill, and to his mind a very natural view, but it was hardly the view that one would suppose could be taken seriously—for the reason that if applied to other Bills of a similar kind it would be rather a strong argument for enforcing the closure in this House. As to whether the discussions of the Bill last session were adequate or the reverse, he wished to reply to what had been said by the hon. Member for Leicester which reflected very seriously upon Members of the Grand Committee. Allusion had been made to the land court, and it was said that that question came up very early—when Clause 3 was discussed—and that twenty-two days had been spent on the Bill altogether. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer failed to recollect the circumstances and was not quite accurate in saying that this question came up almost at the beginning of the proceedings of the Grand Committee. On turning to the official Report of the Committee, which was very short, he found that the question of the Land Court was never discussed at all on its merits. The first point that arose on Clause 3 was that it should be postponed. And there was sound reason for that Motion, because later on in the Bill Clause 19 referred to the jurisdiction of the land court and it was considered advisable by those opposed to the Bill that Clauses 3 and 19 should be in juxtaposition. The mover of the Motion to postpone Clause 3 under a very strict ruling of the Chairman was not entitled to discuss Clause 3. Therefore the question whether a land court was to be set up or not was never discussed at all. The Report said—

"That the Secretary for Scotland claimed that the question be now put."

That closured the question of postponing the clause; and the next question put was that all of Clause 3 down to the words "not exceeding" should be agreed to—thus sweeping away pages of Amendments. It was, therefore, not right to say that the cardinal principles of the Bill had been adequately discussed. He strongly resented the hon. Member of Leicester's insinuation that there was a great deal of repetition and useless discussion especially by English Members. He absolutely denied that insinuation. He asked any hon. member of the Committee whether he thought, for an instance that the first three days discussions were in the least wasted. There was an Amendment dealing with the question of fixity of tenure, the fixing of rents by the land court, and the bringing in the whole of the rest of Scotland under the same procedure as the crofting districts. He denied that these discussions were fruitless or wasted or that Members did not treat these great and important questions in the serious way they deserved. He would be right in saying that for a considerable time more Members spoke in favour of the Bill than against it, and he thought that insinuations of the kind made by the hon. Member for Leicester, who was not present a single day in Committee, were not justified. The hon. Member began his speech as if he were going to see whether the Liberal Party intended to stick up for or ignore the rights of minorities; but he concluded by saying that he and his party had agreed to support the Government. The reason for that was not far to seek. The Motion was a part of the attack on the House of Lords. He wondered whether when the hon. Member talked of the rights of minorities he seriously thought of what the effect such a Motion as was now before the House would have on the House itself? The present Government had carried the system of guillotining Bills to a far greater extent than any proceeding Government, and already they had deprived private Members of the right of discussing important measures. Last session the two most important Bills were the English Small Holdings Bill and the Scottish Small Landholders Bill. Both run concurrently through Grand Committees and both were of great interest to many on that side of the House who thought they ought to have an opportunity of discussing them; but that was impossible. This was one of the gross infringements on the rights of private Members, to remedy which and to restore the dignity of the House of Commons the Prime Minister came in with his large majority. That was one right gone; but they were now to have another right taken from them, and that was, even going through the farce of discussion in Grand Committees, because to allot three days for the discussion of this Small Landholders Bill was nothing but a farce. He wondered if any hon. Member had taken the trouble to read through the Bill as now introduced and compare it with the Bill as passed by the House of Commons last session. But supposing the Bill was identical with that carried through the House last session, he asked whether it would be possible to move even the most cardinal Amendments which ought to be discussed? He did not believe anyone thought it would be possible to discuss the Bill even in a superficial way in the time at the disposal of the House. This further enroachment on the rights of private Members might have very disastrous consequences in the future. What was to prevent the Government coming down to the House in the future and saying: "Here is a Bill to carry out some proposal"—no matter what it might be. "It has been talked of in the country; it is well known to everybody; the arguments for it are quite obvious; therefore we will give you one day for discussion"? That would be only going one shade further than what was now proposed, and therefore the rights of the House of Commons were being gradually taken away from hon. Members by the Executive. It seemed to him to be perfectly ridiculous for them to be sent to the House to represent their constituents if they were to have no opportunity whatever of either discussing or modifying legislation. Some hon. Members opposite seemed to be quite content to sit quiet and allow all their advantages to be taken from them, although when in Opposition their conduct was very different. It was, therefore, very necessary that someone should rise and protest against the invasion of the rights of private Members. He would like to say a word about the aspect of the Motion with regard to its violation of the rights of the House of Lords, for that was at the bottom of the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite. It gave the Resolution its importance and was the cause of a great deal of the fondness with which hon. Members opposite regarded it. Hon. Members talked as if the House of Lords wasted the time of the House of Commons, and as if the House of Lords was not a factor which the electors had in their minds when they returned the present Government to power. It was, it seemed to him, assumed, a great deal more than hon. Members, even with their great majority, were entitled to assume, that everything which they proposed must be the will of the country and that the House of Lords must be coerced into passing it. He did not know whether that assumption was one which hon. Members entertained, but he was certain of this, that the by-elections had shown one thing very clearly, and that was that if it had not been for the presence of the House of Lords, which had suspended judgment over some of those measures which were brought before it, the majority of the Government would not have been so great as it was. He desired to enter his most hearty protest against this Resolution.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract), who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say that he did not see how it was possible in these days to get any Bill which was a controversial one—and these Bills were highly controversial—through the House of Commons without some kind of closure. The days had gone by when Bills, even of second-rate importance, could be passed without it. When an Opposition was called upon to consider a particular closure, they always found it the very worst kind of closure which had ever been put forward, and the Government that brought forward the proposal always thought that it was the best possible scheme suggested by the best possible Government. He had voted against the closure when he was on the opposite side of the House again and again, and he should support it from that side of the House with equanimity. There was a great deal of cant talked up and down the country and in the House of Commons about closure. But he would at the same time like to point out that there was one novel point about this particular Resolution which had not been referred to that afternoon. It was that this was the first time they had two Bills included in one guillotine Motion. Hitherto they had always had Motions dealing with a particular Bill, or a particular stage of a Bill, but here they had two Bills—the Small Landowners Bill and the Land Values Bill—brought within the one Motion, and he did not see why if that was done on this occasion it should not be developed in the future so that they might have half a dozen Bills next session similarly dealt with, and in the next Parliament they might have the Government mapping out the time of the session and saying that so many days should be devoted to each Bill. He did regard that as a very grave and novel proposition, and thought that the point was worthy of consideration by the House, whether they should permit this innovation of grouping Bills, by way of one guillotine Motion, and so push any number of Bills through in one discussion in the House of Commons. The point had been raised that these Bills could not be properly discussed or amended, and it seemed to him that the time given under the Resolution was either too short or too long. If the Bills were amended in Committee they would have three days discussion, but every one knew that they would not be so amended, and that the amount of time which would be allowed to them would be two days, which he submitted was far too short a period. If, however, it was intended to send these Bills up line by line as they were to the House of Lords then the time was too long. Coming back to the point which he had before made, he regarded the grouping of Bills as a very serious matter, and as one which ought to be seriously considered.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) did not think he could congratulate His Majesty's Government on the motives of the support accorded to the Resolution from their supporters on the other side of the House, or their allies below the gangway. The hon. Member who had just sat down told them that he had voted with equal pleasure for the closure and against it, and that he himself was prepared to increase the power of the closure, and he thought that in the best of all possible worlds the more they had of it the better. Following up the hon. Member's argument, he presumed he would be glad, and for himself he would not be surprised if the Government shortly proposed that all Bills mentioned in the King's Speech were comprised in one happy dispatch and appointed to become law within a limited measure of time. But the Government had another supporter in the hon. Member for Leith Burghs who said that he would vote for this Resolution. And on what ground? Because he thought that the particular Bill to which it referred was so hoplessly bad that it was not worth discussing and that any time devoted to discussing it—even the three days allotted—would be lost time. They knew the hon. Gentleman's feelings towards that Bill. He was one of the most effective critics of it, and there was one thing which made his criticism more serious, and that was that no one on the Committee was better acquainted than he was with the circumstances with which the Bill professed to deal. The Government had also had another supporter in the hon. Member for Leicester, who affected to disregard the interests of the Scottish people and to look to something larger, the general privileges of free speech in the House of Commons. But what were the limitations of that privilege which the hon. Member as the protagonist of the Labour Party was prepared to agree to? He hoped that his followers would take note of the exact limits of free speech which were claimed at the hands of the Government by the Labour Party. It was a free speech which meant that when a certain number of days had been given to the discussion of the Bill, without inquiry as to how that discussion had ranged, without inquiry as to what were the important principles involved in the Bill, simply because so many days and so many hours had been spent upon it, that was to be pronounced to be an adequate allowance of time, and the hon. Member as representing the Labour Party said he would be satisfied with that dole from the Government. But the hon. Member said something more; he said the Government might have withdrawn this Resolution, or given a longer time to the Bill, or done away with all restrictions, if the Leader of the Opposition had guaranteed that the measure would not be discussed for more than a certain number of days. He did not know whether the members of the Labour Party were disposed to take from their Leader any such strict orders as to the limitation of their speeches and the time of discussion, but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman upon whom he looked as his Leader would be prepared to pledge his followers under any circumstances, and no matter what were the difficulties of the questions involved, to confine the discussion to a certain number of days prescribed by the Government. They asserted for themselves, whatever the Labour Party might do, some more serious measure of liberty of speech in this House. Could there, he asked, be two Bills more impossible than those now under discussion to yoke together in this Procrustean bed? The one was a Bill with many clauses, many principles, and a vast amount of machinery to settle. Not one of the clauses of the Bill could be discussed without hearing the arguments of the experts on both sides. The other Bill was a tentative one, and involved a very serious and they thought a pernicious principle, though he knew that the Solicitor-General held that their opposition was only due to crass ignorance. But the principle could be discussed within certain limits as it involved no elaborate details. How the Government could say that these two Bills could be measured by the same standard he could not understand. It was not only, however, the provisions of the Bills but their history which differentiated them. The Land Bill went before a Grand Committee of Scottish and other Members upstairs. It was in charge of the Secretary for Scotland. For the first few days, the proceedings were conducted perfectly amicably, and during that time the arguments and the speeches were furnished quite as much by the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman as by his opponents. But a *ukase* went out that speeches were to cease, and from that time they came exclusively from the adverse critics of the Bill. Those who wished for some modification or who were doubtful in regard to the proceedings sat silent at the behest of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland. No arguments were advanced by the right hon Gentleman, who time after time with automatic regularity rose and said that the Government had carefully considered the question; they had made up their minds that this was the proper course to be followed, and he must now move the closure. That was the only argument for that course that the right hon. Gentleman thought proper to pursue. They all knew his general courtesy and were not disposed to be hard upon him in any way, but the right hon. Gentleman was not made to be a tyrant. He was made with better qualities, but, unfortunately, he had thought fit to abandon argument and to proceed by automatic closure, which was moved as many as fifty-three times in the Committee. What was the course with regard to the other Bill, which was in the charge of the Lord Advocate? The closure was never once moved, and in two or three days the Bill was passed through Committee and, pernicious as they thought its central principle to be, it was, at all events, to some extent adequately discussed. The Prime Minister said they were determined in their action because they knew that they had the great mass of the opinion of Scotland behind them. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Government had not always been so adamantine in their views or so faithful to them. There was a Land Bill in 1906 as well as in 1907, and in the interval between the two the views of the Government had very materially matured. They would have liked to know how much further the views of the Government had matured in 1908. In the Valuation of Land Bill the evolution of the views of the Government was even more remarkable, because though the Government voted in 1906 for the Second Reading of a private Member's Valuation Bill, the Lord-Advocate said he could not admit the principle embodied in that Bill as to the taxation of existing feu duties. Before the end of 1906, the Solicitor-General at least had come to a very different opinion as to the taxation of feu duties. The House would like to know if that Bill was revived again, with all the fresh knowledge and new considerations, whether the difference of opinion between the Lord-Advocate and Solicitor-General for Scotland had developed or had ceased; whether the facts in regard to the taxation of feu duties had shown any fresh divergence or not. The Prime Minister, he believed, had given an assurance that no existing contracts would be interfered with, and the House would find great difficulty in reconciling that assurance with the statement of his views by the Solicitor-General. He was ready to admit for the purposes of argument that the Government had a majority of Scottish opinion in their favour at present; they had the largest number of seats in this House. But in their wildest moments did it not occur to the Government that there were hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland who doubted the wisdom of this proposed legislation? Did the Government doubt that, though they won in the last general election, there was a large body of opinion in Scotland that doubted the wisdom and the expediency of the Government's proposals? Did they imagine that they would initiate wise legislation which would be broad based on the people's will if they did not conciliate the doubters by at least showing them that their arguments were listened to? And did they think they would conciliate them by an indiscriminate use of the closure? People of Scotland were very different from what he believed them to be if they were conciliated by such a process. Even the Government's own supporters would look with distrust on a procedure which turned a deaf ear to the arguments of their opponents and administered the closure indiscriminately in this way. It was not a question of closuring those who spoke in this House. It did not matter much whether their mouths were closed or not. It was a question of the men who were behind the Members of Parliament, the men in the country who, mistaken as the Government believed them to be, had opinions and who were disappointed and almost rebellious when they believed that their opinions were denied a hearing in this House. Did the Government think they would conciliate those men by telling them that the opinions they wished to see represented in this House, and the doubts which they honestly entertained had been crushed into silence? The hon. Member for Leicester had said, let the Government do with this Bill as they liked. It was their business, let them change and alter it as they pleased, he would vote for it within the limited time of three days which they allowed. But so far as he (Sir Henry Craik) was concerned, he and those who thought with him claimed some larger measure of Parliamentary freedom than that indicated by the hon. Member.

Mr. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said that what they had to consider was whether the Bills had had adequate discussion, and whether hon. Gentlemen opposite were justified in fighting against the closuring Resolution. He thought they would find that not only had there been ample discussion, but that they were singularly fortunate in having another opportunity of discussing the Bills at all. The Licensing Bill of the last Conservative Government had no been discussed in the country when it was introduced. It came up in the House for the first time and though passed no doubt by large majorities it was not passed by such large majorities as the present Bills. It then went to another place, and, fortunately for hon. Gentlemen opposite, when they were in power the other House was a "bourne from which no traveller returned." These Bills, passed as they were by vast majorities, were returned once more and hon. Gentlemen had been offered a second time to discuss them. It appeared to him that the time proposed to be allocated to the Bills was quite ample. Nothing would be gained by any longer discussion, and opinion neither in the House nor in the country would be altered. A good deal of discussion had taken place as to proceedings in Grand Committee. He was a member of that Committee and he was present at every sitting but one. He would not bandy charges of obstruction, but if in twenty-two days they could not discus the Bill in such a Committee, then Parliamentary institutions were futile. Did hon. Members opposite say that if they discussed the Bill for twenty-two days in the House of Commons, as at present constituted, its mind would be changed in any essential detail? He did not for one moment believe it. Of course, hon. Gentlemen opposite might say that they wanted to show them up to the country. But he did not believe that there had been any Bills in the present generation which had been more considered in Scotland. They had had two recesses in which unfortunate Scottish Members like himself had had to talk about nothing else. He confessed he was sick of the Bills himself; they had talked so much about them. They had had speeches, not only by Scottish Members, but by Peers and Conservatives, led by the Leader of the Opposition. Scotland had been seldom so much honoured by Parliamentary talent, and it was all upon these Bills. They had had the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin. The right hon. Gentleman was on the Grand Committee, and led the Opposition to the Bills. The Opposition created sometimes a considerable amount of heat and temper; but he could say that he doubted whether at the end there was any Member of that Commission more popular with the Scottish Members than the right hon. Gentleman. He came to Scotland and represented the view against the Bills. They had the Leader of the Opposition, who devoted the whole of his speech at Glasgow to the measures. There were no doubt some points on which the Scottish people did not thoroughly understand the political views of the Leader of the Opposition, but his view on these Bills was understood clearly and distinctly by everybody in Scotland. Not only had they had these leading lights, but they had had Lord Rosebery. He was accustomed to ploughing a lonely furrow, but it seemed to him (Mr. Crombie) that on this occasion he emerged from his lonely furrow and engaged in a regular ploughing match. Under these circumstances he claimed that it could not be said that the Bills had not been discussed threadbare. If they were discussed for weeks they would make no change in the opinion of the country, or in the voting of the House of Commons. Therefore, in the interests of Parliamentary time, was it possible or conceivable that more than two or three days should be wasted on the measures? He thought that if the Government had consented to give more time than they had done they would as trustees of the time of the House of Commons have committed a most serious offence.

Colonel KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said the Prime Minister had put forward as a reason for this Resolution that the Small Landholders Bill had been adequately discussed, because so much time was devoted to it in Committee upstairs. He wished to protest against the idea that a discussion in Committee was in any sense equivalent to a discussion in Committee of the Whole House where the speeches were reported, and the attention of the country was called to the measure. That advantage was altogether lacking in the Committee upstairs. Although this Bill had been discussed at considerable length, it had not had much effect upon public opinion. In regard to the Small Landholders Bill, that was a measure in regard to which he took a prominent part, and a distinct line of policy was pursued throughout in regard to it by the Unionist Party. They tried to induce the promoters of the Bill to accept an alteration with regard to the crofting areas, and to apply the principle of the English Bill to the South of Scotland. If the discussion had taken place on the floor of the House, public opinion would have been more influenced. He did not agree that further discussion would have no effect. They might just as well adopt the suggestion that after the introduction of the King's Speech the Government should bring forward a Closure Resolution closuring by compartments all the measures in that Speech, and providing that they must be passed in a month. The Unionist Party had fought this Bill throughout on recognised principles, and whenever the Small Landholders Bill was passed he ventured to say that it would be based on lines consistent with the attitude adopted by the Unionist Party on the Committee upstairs. He felt sure that if Scottish Members were left absolutely free to follow their own opinion they would gladly accept a compromise on the lines he had indicated, which would work for peace and happiness in the country districts in a way which the Government plan could never do. Had the Government last session accepted such a compromise this question would now have been comfortably settled on lines upon which similar portions of Scotland and England would have been treated alike, and the Crofters Act would have been extended in those districts where it was most suitable. That system would have suited the people of Scotland better [Cries of "No."] There were hundreds and thousands of Scotsmen who were in the habit of appealing to English Members for representation. He had received petitions from Scotsmen asking him if he could do anything to save them from their Member; consequently in that House he had not only to do his duty to his constituents in England, but he had an interest in Scotch legislation. He honestly believed that the Small Landholders Bill was never intended to pass. ['Oh, oh."] It was drafted in such a way to show that it was never intended to pass, but it was thought that it would serve as one of the snowballs with which the House of Lords was to be pelted. By such tactics, instead of undermining the position of the House of Lords the Government would find that they were fortifying and securing its position in the opinion of the great bulk of Scottish people. He could congratulate the Prime Minister upon a great many things, but not upon the ingenuousness of his ingenuity upon this question, although he could congratulate him heartily upon the transparency of his tactics.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton) said the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition were always interesting if not illuminating. He thought the speech he had just delivered might be described as thin and thrilling. The right hon. Gentleman had asked that the Small Landholders Bill should have adequate discussion; but what did he mean by that? He had had the honour or rather the painful duty of sitting on the Committee which dealt with this Bill, and as a new Member he confessed that he was more than surprised at the tactics adopted by those who were opposed to the measure. He might be wrong, but he held a very definite opinion that behind the rail for the public there were legal minds trained in all the trickery of forming and framing Amendments simply for the purpose of offering opposition for the measure. Many of those Amendments were merely repetition and when they failed the phraseology was altered, although the intention was actually the same, namely to waste the time of the Committee. Twenty-two days were occupied in that way. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs said he represented an urban district. He was wondering whether it was the Laird of Dalmeny rather than the electors of Leith Burghs. He claimed to know something about those electors, for he had addressed a meeting of probably some 2,000 or 3,000 on the Leith Links, and if the hon. Member for Leith had been present he felt sure that he would not have got the vote of confidence he seemed so confident about. He was prepared to challenge the hon. Member to meet him on Leith Links to defend the part he took during the proceedings of that Committee. With regard to what had been said about the Labour Party, they might be "young men in a hurry," but they had had a very severe training, and they were quite conscious of the needs of the democracy in this country. They knew there were a large number of people suffering terrible privations who were paying attention to Parliamentary action and watching their proceedings. It was his duty week by week to go all over the country, and he was continually being asked: "Why don't you do more?" When he complained that it was the fault of the Parliamentary machine he was asked: "Why don't you smash it?" Therein lay the danger. If hon. Members sitting on the Opposition side wished to save a catastrophe they ought to help to use the time of the House to pass useful legislation instead of framing so many Amendments. He appealed to the Opposition to save themselves. This Resolution was that two Bills which had been adequately discussed both in Parliament and in the country should be passed with limited discussion. The Scottish Small Landholders Bill occupied more than enough time during the twenty-eight days it was under consideration. As one who was looked upon as an extremely dangerous young man he had hazarded a recommendation or an appreciation of this particular Bill, and he was bound to confess that amongst audiences avowedly opposed to the Government he had heard very little objection to the Bill as an instalment of land reform. After the time which had been used in the country and upstairs discussing this matter he thought the Government were justified in bringing forward this particular Resolution. The Labour Party did not accept the statement that minorities must suffer; at any rate if they had to suffer they were not going to suffer silently. If the Closure was not applied to this measure the same brigade who opposed the Bill on the last occasion would be present again to carry out the same tactics, and in the interests of the dignity of the House and social reform the Government were justified in bringing forward this Resolution, which he hoped every Member of the Labour Party would support.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said the Resolution seemed to be an ingenious method of dodging round the Constitution, leading gradually towards government by oligarchy instead of by the free representatives of the people. But undoubtedly the Government deserved a considerable amount of well-justified criticism for suggesting that two Bills of such immense importance as these should be carried in the course of from four to six days, Bills both of which dealt with the whole incidence of local taxation, and one designed to arrest the flow of landlord capital on to small holdings. It had been alleged that the Small Landholders Bill had been adequately discussed, because it occupied twenty-two days in Grand Committee, and that nothing could be gained by further discussion, because the whole of the Party opposite had a closed mind on the subject, and were not open to conviction. Whatever might be the case as to the amount of time devoted to the discussion in detail of the Bill, the important fact remained that large blocks of it went through the Committee stage without any discussion whatever. The consequence was that many Amendments were never reached, and it was quite evident therefore that the Bills had not been adequately discussed. If the passing of these Bills through that House was meant as a serious attempt at legislation, and if it was really desired that they should go upon the Statute-book, was it not reasonable that, although they might dispose in some such method as was proposed, of such parts of the Bill as had been discussed, some provision should be made that those portions which had not been touched upon at all should receive some discussion? Otherwise they went through the House without any real expression of the opinion of Members upon a very large proportion of the measure. If the object was not to put them upon the Statute-book, but merely to fill the proverbial cup, he had no objection to the proposal, and he thought the Bills would form a beverage to pour into that cup which the other House would have very great justification in refusing to swallow in their present form.

*MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton) wished to say a few words as one who had a great distaste for the guillotine. He could instance that by the fact that he had addressed two questions to the Prime Minister last session from which they learned that the Government were considering plans to avoid as far as possible the use of closure by compartment. All the objections that had been raised to the discussion of the Scottish Small Holders Bill last session as inadequate were due to the fact that the guillotine was employed—the best Parliamentary weapon then in existence. But this Motion seemed to stand differently from any other guillotine Motion that had ever been proposed. It was not a Motion for the infringement of the liberties of the House, but one for their protection. Could any hon. Member honestly say that in his opinion it would be to the interests of the House to spend a large portion of the session once again in discussing two Bills that had already been discussed. Supposing that the discussion last year was inadequate, by going over the clauses that were inadequately discussed did anyone think the discussion would thus become more adequate? There would simply be a repetition of the same Amendments, the same speeches and the same results. The hon. Member for Glasgow University objected to the two Bills, one of which he said was, and the other was not, adequately discussed, being considered in the same guillotine Resolution. Both Bills, apart from their merits and the treatment they had received, stood to-day in the same category, because both had been discussed and passed through that House, and therefore it was fitting that they should both receive the same treatment in order that they might be sent to obtain adequate discussion in another place. It had been again and again said upon the other side that these Bills were never intended to become law, and were merely useful for filling up the cup. Was it impossible to persuade hon. Members opposite that there was no necessity to fill up the cup of the House of Lords? Their case against the House of Lords seemed to him to be an obvious one. It was simply and solely that the people of this country were denied Liberal or Labour Government when or if they voted Liberal or Labour in the same sense that they could have Conservative Government when they voted Conservative. Political history, both modern and recent, gave ample evidence of this contention, and he was perfectly confident that when the Prime

Minister went to the country to ask for their judgment he would find that no process of filling up the cup had been required to prove an obvious proposition. He was an English Member representing an English agricultural constituency, and he wanted this Bill to pass because it would provide small holdings for the people of Scotland. He knew that the English Small Holdings Act had been a great success. Did he know anything of Scotland he would in his ignorance have suggested that the Scottish smallholder would be very well served with the English Small Holdings Act, but he did not know anything about Scotland, and just as they, English Members, obtained for their constituencies an English Small Holdings Act which they considered advantageous, so he was anxious that Members representing Scotland should obtain for their constituencies that Bill which in their almost unanimous opinion they considered to be to the advantage of their constituents. No one could fail to have been struck by the large number of views raised as to the opinions in Scotland on the merits of this Bill. The right hon. Member for Shropshire said Scotsmen did not like it. The Leader of the Opposition also knew that Scotland very strongly condemned the measure. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs also said Scotland did not like the Bill. But it was remarkable that not one of these gentlemen happened to have been returned for a Scottish constituency whose inhabitants would directly profit by the Small Holders Bill. Although one ought to be deferential to the opinions of experts such as the hon. Member for Leith Burghs, there could be no reason to doubt that the right person to approach such a subject as this was the man who had been returned by a Scottish constituency which was to profit by the Bill, and who had reason to know more accurately than anybody else what would be of advantage to him in his constituency. Scottish Members were almost unanimous in saying that the Scottish Small Holders Bill was best calculated to produce Scottish small holders. For that reason everybody interested in small holdings ought to support the Bill, and if they desired its passage it was surely almost preposterous to ask that they should go over again the weary course of last Session and debate what had been debated, which would delay the passage, not only of that Bill but of a large number of other reforms which they were all desirous of seeing passed. There was very little sympathy in the country for those who protested against the guillotine. The voter read his daily paper and knew all that there was to be known and had thought all that there was to be thought about the Bill after reading a leader on it in the *Daily Mail.* The country was always impatient of prolonged discussions in that House. It therefore behoved the House to be particularly careful about the curtailment of discussion on any topic of general interest such as this, but he could not feel that any Member was really in earnest in thinking that anything either in free discussion or in the Amendment of the Bill could be gained by doing over again what had been done. He could not but believe that the only result of such a course would be to curtail discussion of other measures for which there was an urgent demand. All that this had taught them was that the sooner that careful consideration, which the Prime Minister and the Government were now undertaking for doing away largely if not wholly with the cumbrous unscientific method of the guillotine, reached a point at which the House could take action, the better for proper and adequate discussion of their measures.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he wanted to draw attention to one or two inconsistencies in the somewhat curious arguments which had been used by supporters of the Government in favour of the guillotine Resolution. Some said the Scottish Bills had been fully discussed in the House last Session; others that it was true the Scottish Bills had not been discussed in the House, but that they had been discussed in Scotland and that was sufficient. The Chancellor of the Exchequer justified the action of the Government in sending these Bills to Grand Committee on the ground that it was better than a discussion in the House because one of the measures applied only to Scotland, therefore it only required discussion by Scottish Members. The right hon. Gentleman must have forgotten, however, that the Land Values Bill was treated in the same way as the Small Landholders Bill, although it was stated over and over again that later on the principle of the Land Values Bill was to be applied to the south of the Tweed as well as to the north. If that were so he failed to see why the principle should be discussed solely by Scottish Members and what justification the right hon. Gentleman had for stating that such a discussion was as good as a discussion by the whole House. The thing was manifestly absurd. He believed the Government had other reasons for re-introducing the Small Landholders Bill. From whatever point of view they looked at it they were bound to come to the conclusion that it was desired in the form proposed simply as a weapon to be used against the House of Lords. They were told last year over and over again that Scottish agriculturists, especially in the lowlands of Scotland, desired the measure, but he failed to see how that could be so. The Scottish Chamber of Agriculture had declared itself unanimously against it. If right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite were really so desirous of bringing in the measure in a form which would carry with it the greatest good to the people of Scotland, surely they should have taken some account of the resolutions in opposition to it that had been passed at meeting after meeting of agriculturists in the lowlands of Scotland. However much hon. Members opposite desired to see the measure upon the Statute Book they could not deny that there was a great division of opinion in Scotland upon the subject. Something should have been done to meet that opposition. On the other hand if a good Bill had been brought in, it might have passed in another place and from the Government's point of view that would never do. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared that the reason the Bill had not passed last session was because of the iniquitous action of another place. If that were so, why did the Government seek to introduce the measure again this session in precisely the same form. Was the House of Lords likely to change its mind in so short a time? Surely, if the Government desired so earnestly to help the people of Scotland it should bring in a measure which would not run so great risk of rejection by the House of Lords. There was one other point. The Prime Minister had excused his guillotine Motion on the ground that these Bills had been adequately discussed as far as the Commons were concerned last session, and that it was the Government's desire now to give the House of Lords an adequate opportunity of considering the measures. If that were so, why had not the Bills been introduced this session in the House of Lords? The whole thing came back to his first point. Whichever way they looked at it they were bound to come to the conclusion that the Government's whole motive for introducing the Bills word for word as they left the House last session was simply that they might be used as a weapon against the House of Lords. He was certain, however, that neither the people of this country nor the people of Scotland would support the Government on so transparent a device.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York) said an hon. Member on the other side of the House had pointed out that this Resolution was unprecedented, in that it comprised identical guillotine proposals with respect to two Bills. That led him to ask whether the Bills were so similar in character that they should be treated in exactly the same manner. The two Bills were entirely different in character. If a period of three days was enough for one why should it be enough for the other? He had come to the conclusion that the decision to give each Bill three days had been come to in a slap-dash fashion without adequate consideration. The same hon. Member had stated that he was in favour of this procedure for all Bills. He did not think that even this revolutionary House of Commons would be prepared for that. The proposal in this Resolution was against constitutional procedure as they had been accustomed to regard it. Erskine May said that Parliamentary procedure was interrupted by a prorogation. Surely then if a Bill failed to become law during a particular session, when the next session came on it became a new matter, and they had no right to try and shorten debate upon it because it had been thoroughly discussed in the previous session. Of course the reply to that argument might be that just as the King could do no wrong, Parliament could do no wrong if it chose to pass a Resolution dealing with the matter. Still the constitutional law did stand that if a session concluded without a Bill becoming law the matter ended there, and when the next session came round, if the Bill was re-introduced, the House was entitled to re-discuss it thoroughly in all its stages. So much for Parliamentary procedure; but after all he supposed that the broad question was whether justice was being done in this matter. He ventured to doubt it. At the beginning of last session when the new Grand Committees were set up they certainly were led to believe that no contentious Bill would be sent upstairs, but would be discussed on the floor of the House. No sooner, however, had that promise been made than it was broken. This Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill was one of the most contentious measures introduced last session. It involved the whole question of procedure in regard to land tenure in Scotland, yet it was sent upstairs to a Grand Committee and ordinary Members heard nothing of what was going on there, as the proceedings were not reported. He was interested in land in Scotland as well as in England, and he knew no more of what happened upstairs in regard to this Bill than the man in the moon; and scores and scores of hon. Members were in exactly the same position. Therefore, he did not think they had been fairly dealt with, when the Government began by breaking their promise and now proposed to adopt this wholly unprecedented procedure. This Government would not go on for ever; he did not suppose that the most sanguine Member on the Government side of the House would deny that the trend of opinion in the country was turning and that in a short time it might happen that those now in opposition would sit on the Government Benches. That was just as sure as day followed night. And what would happen? They would be inclined to retaliate upon those at present in power. Hon. Gentlemen on the Government Benches must not then complain, if the same measure which they had meted out was in turn meted out to them. If he spoke for a moment on the question of tactics it was only because the Prime Minister treated the manner in which he was proceeding with regard to both the Bills mentioned in the Resolution as a matter of tactics. The Government wanted to hurry the Bills into another place, but what were they going to gain by that? An hon. Member on the Government side had said: "Let us hurry through the Small Landholders Bill as quickly as possible." And what reason did he give? "Because the Bill was dead; because it was a corpse." They wanted to fill up the cup of the iniquities of the House of Lords. But could they not see that instead of filling up the cup of the House of Lords they were only filling up their own cup or, if he might complete the metaphor of the hon. Member, they were only filling up their own coffin, and why? Because Scotland did not want the Bill. The agriculturists of Scotland did not want it. From his own standpoint he held that the Scottish landed interest—whether represented by landlords or tenant farmers—did not want the whole landed system of Scotland upset, seeing that it had served them in the past better than any other system could have done. Moreover, the proposed system had ruined Ireland and before it was finished might cost the taxpayers of the country £200,000,000 to get rid of. What was the hurry from the Government's own point of view? Were they so anxious to get on with the rest of the legislation for the session? Were they wildly desirous of reaching the Licensing Bill? Little birds sometimes sang falsely, but little birds were intimating in strong tones that there was not complete unanimity in the Government or amongst their supporters on that Bill. Were they so anxious to reach the Education Bill or the Roman Catholic University for Ireland Bill, or the discussions on the Navy? Therefore he would have thought that from the point of view of tactics the Government ought to spend as many days as they possibly could over these two Bills, on the principle of "lingering sweetness long-drawn out." In any case they were only marching to their own funeral. The Bills would undoubtedly be thrown out, or largely amended, in another place, and therefore there was no necessity for this exceptional Resolution. They did not suggest the adoption of the system of carrying over Bills from one session to another, but tried to arrive at the same conclusion by a sidewind. He believed that the boomerang which the Government had thrown into the air would fall back disastrously on their own heads.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) congratulated the hon. Member for York on his speech, with the exception of one point. He thought the hon. Member made a great mistake when he told hon. Gentlemen opposite that they would probably receive the same measure which they meted out now to those in Opposition when places were changed and the Unionists returned to power. They were men of principle on that side of the House and had, therefore, a great respect for the rights and privileges of the House of Commons. And although he was only a a humble back-bencher, he could assure hon. Gentlemen that they would not be led away by the bad example of the Prime Minister and those who were going to support him to-morrow. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, who was private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave three reasons why he should support the Resolution. First of all, because he was against the guillotine. But if ever there was a measure which was going to be forced through the House by the guillotine, it was this Resolution. The hon. Member said that he had had a satisfactory conversation with the Prime Minister, who assured him that he was considering a plan which would avoid the necessity of the guillotine. But the Prime Minister had told them that afternoon that he had been unable to devise any scheme which would do away with the guillotine; therefore, the first argument of the hon. Gentleman fell to the ground. The second argument of the hon. Gentleman was that when he talked to the constituencies about the privileges and rights of the House of Commons the constituencies did not care; that, in fact, it was rather difficult to find an elector who cared about them. Surely if the hon. Gentleman had studied the utterances of his Leader he would know that the Prime Minister, in his election address, stated that the late Government had by the unprecedented use of their unrestricted power, abused the procedure of the legislature, impaired its authority and reduced it so far as was in their power into a machine for registering the decrees of the Executive. Therefore, it was quite evident that the Prime Minister did not in 1906 share the views of his supporter, that the electorate as a whole paid no attention, or did not care whether or not the rights of the House of Commons were curtailed and the legislature reduced to a machine to register the decrees of the Executive. Sometimes words came home to roost, and he must say that he thought this was an instance of that fact, because what did this Motion mean except that the legislature was to be converted into a machine to register the decrees of the Executive? The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire said he did not pay much attention to the position taken up by the hon. Member for Leith Burghs, because his constituency would not benefit by the Bill, and he thought that the votes of hon. Members who sat for constituencies which would benefit by it and who would gain advantages for themselves ought to be considered. It came to this, therefore, that they were not to consider whether a measure was right for the country as a whole, but whether any Member whose constituency would gain some advantage by it, supported it. Was that the doctrine of the great Radical Party? He must confess, and he said it with great humility, that he had not any opinion of Radical ideas, but he did not think that they were so low as to avow that their object was to find out what any particular electorate wanted and give it to them.

*MR. MONTAGU did not want to interrupt the hon. Baronet, but he wished to point out that he had grievously misunderstood his argument on all the three points he had dealt with.

SIR F. BANBURY said he should be glad if the hon. Member would correct him in any way. The speech of the hon. Member for Leicester was heralded with great triumph by the statement that the principle that he had to consider was whether or not the rights of the minority were going to be affected. If they were affected, then the Labour Party would stand to a man against oppression. Then he found all of a sudden that this was not going to interfere with the rights of the minority, and therefore the Labour Party were not concerned to take up that attitude. What were the rights of the minority if the power to discuss a measure for which they did not care was taken away from them? They had no other rights in that House, except rights of discussing. He remembered Sir William Harcourt, who was a great Parliamentarian, saying that the meaning of the word "Parliament" was that it was the debating house of the nation, but hon. Members opposite, and the Labour Party especially, seemed to think that the House of Commons was a machine to turn out legislation which would benefit their particular supporters. It never was anything of the sort. It was a place where measures should be discussed and where Members should meet together and debate all the proposals of interest, not to one particular party of the community, but to the country as a whole. The hon. Member for the Newton Division said that he went down to his constituency, and they said: "Why are you so slow in the House of Commons; why do you not get on quicker?" He replied: "It is the Parliamentary machine which gets on so slowly," and then he was received with these words: "Why do not you smash it?" That was exactly what this Motion was going to do—smash the machine; and that was why they on that side, who were Parliamentarians and great admirers of the Mother of Parliaments, were opposed to any such Resolution. The hon. Member for Leicester appealed to those Members who were business men, and asked what business man would say that a discussion which took twenty-two days in Committee was not sufficient. The reply to that was that there were only eighty-five members of the Committee, and 670 Members of the House. If a board of business men was going to consider a matter which affected the whole undertaking, they would not refer it to a sub-committee. This was one of the most important questions that could be brought before the House of Commons, and it referred to a Bill for revolutionising the whole land system of Scotland. It was therefore absolutely necessary that such a Bill should be discussed. He had the honour of being a member of the Committee, and he ventured to say that the supporters of the Government occupied as much time in discussion as the Opposition. On one day, for thirteen or fourteen speeches made by Radical Members, only seven or eight were made by the Opposition. Some of the supporters of the Government took a strong line and said they did not like the Bill, and would have nothing to do with it, and he hoped to find that consistency for which he thought the Radical Party were so well known. But he was disappointed, as they did not vote, and on one occasion the hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty voted for the closure on his own Amendment. The Leader of the Opposition had a copy of the Bill in which the portions of it which were closured were underlined in red ink. He had looked at it, and refreshed his memory, and he found that the closure was applied to nearly all of the most important provisions of the measure. They were promised a discussion on certain portions of the Bill later on, but did not get it, as those parts were also closured without debate. He thought he had proved to every reasonable man that there was no such thing as free discussion upstairs in Committee. An hon. Member who spoke from the Labour Benches made an attack upon the Unionist Members for going behind the bar of the Grand Committee and communicating with one legal gentleman who was looking up references. Why should they not? What about the officials of the Department who did not sit behind the bar but at the table in the Committee-room, beside the right hon. Gentleman, and who were paid public money to be there? At all events, they paid their one man with their own money and not out of public funds. The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire argued that as the Small Holdings Bill had been successful in England, it was right to have this Bill, which differed from it in every principle, in Scotland. That seemed to him a most ludicrous argument, and after all the hon. Member must first show that the Small Holdings Bill had been a success in England. The impression of people in the agricultural districts was that they were going to get land for nothing and that the State were going to pay their rates and taxes for them. When they found that nothing of the sort was the case, hon. Gentlemen would not be received with such cheers in their constituencies as they had hitherto been. He thought he had given substantial reasons why this Motion should not be passed and he believed that if they had a vote by ballot upon it, it would not be carried.

*MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that in 1902 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking in that House, quoted the late Mr. Gladstone on this very subject. Mr. Gladstone said very justly that the majority must prevail, but that still an equally important thing was the manner and the spirit in which the majority should prevail. He thought that quotation was a very good guide to them now, and that they should approach the consideration of this Motion very much in that kind of spirit. He would draw the attention of the House to this further fact, that on that occasion the present Prime Minister laid down certain principles which should guide them in considering this very matter. He was then dealing with a proposal to closure a debate on a certain measure, but to-day he had brought in a Motion which would automatically shut out discussion on two Bills at once—a kind of right-and-left shot. This, no doubt, would satisfy his supporters more than it would the rest of the country. The Prime Minister then laid down some principles for the guidance of the House. They ought, he said, in examining the Motion first of all to consider its texture and nature. Well, many who looked at the texture and nature of these Bills, which technically they had not seen but which they knew something about owing to the slight provision made for their discussion last year, were not by any means enamoured of them. They considered them revolutionary in their nature, and by their texture calculated to set up that very unsatisfactory state of things which at present existed in Ireland, namely, dual ownership. The Government recognised that in Ireland dual ownership was a curse, and were attempting to deal with it. It was set up in comparatively recent times and everybody had already seen the immense evil which could result from such a mischievous proceeding. Yet the right hon. Gentleman proposed in the texture and nature of one of these Bills to set up dual ownership in a country where it did not now exist, save in the crofting areas. He proposed to extend the principle to areas in which there was no demand for it, and where it would only result in inflicting a similar curse to that which it had inflicted in Ireland—a curse which would have to be dealt with in the future by legislation as unsatisfactory and objectionable in character as the Irish legislation of recent years. The House was also told that they ought to consider the origin of the Bills. They did not like them even when they considered their origin. They considered, and they were justified in saying they considered, that the origin of these Bills was to be found in party spite. His right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition had adduced conclusive arguments and conclusive proofs that these measures were brought before Parliament last year, and were to be brought before Parliament this year, simply for the purpose of picking a quarrel with another place. His right hon. friend had said, and in his opinion with justice, that these measures were not intended to pass; that they were window-dressing measures and merely intended to destroy the good understanding which had hitherto existed between the representatives of the people of this country and the House of Lords. Hon. Members also recognised that in their origin and their character these Bills were socialistic, and for that reason, if for no other, they considered it was unjust and wrong that they should be asked to give them the exceptional facilities which they desired to obtain for their consideration by the application of the guillotine. The Prime Minister also pointed out to the House that they ought to consider the feeling the Bill raised. They had had sufficient illustrations from Lord Rosebery of what the feeling of the country was with regard to the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill. The measure last year was condemned root and branch by the noble Lord, who contributed more than anyone else in the country to its being rejected. The feeling in the Lowlands was that this provision was not wanted; they did not want the curse of dual ownership. In the opinion of many hon. Members the feeling raised by these two measures did not warrant the course proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. They were also invited to consider the urgency of the matter, but the most earnest supporter of the Government would not claim that there was any urgency for these Bills. There was no apparent urgency except that this procedure would enable the right hon. Gentleman to come to close grips with the other House, a thing he was apparently not anxious to do. Hon. Members were also exhorted to consider the evil consequences of delay. The right hon. Gentleman and those associated with him might consider that there would be some evil in delay, but others thought the longer the delay the better it would be for all concerned. If these measures were not intended to pass, a certain amount of delay would not affect them much, and if they did pass they would only do harm. The last word of guidance which fell from the right hon. Gentleman was that they should consider in a matter of this kind the nature of the obstruction which had made it necessary to bring forward such a Motion. The measures not having been before the House, hon. Members had not had an opportunity of looking at them or considering them, and did not know if their provisions were identical with those which the House had a cursory glance at last year. Therefore, it could not be claimed that there was great urgency on the ground of obstruction. There had been no obstruction last year in the consideration of these Bills. There had been no opportunity of obstruction because they were so rushed through the House that hon. Members had no opportunity of discussing them, and many of the principles of the measures were not discussed in detail on any occasion. Therefore, upon the principles which the right hon. Gentleman himself laid down in 1902, all the reasons for the necessity of his Motion fell to the ground. And further, to quote the words of the Prime Minister—

> "Although on those grounds no case had been made for this Motion, it was intended to inflict this grievous blow on the privileges of Parliament on its account."

That was on account of these two Bills. In respect to the question to which he had referred, namely, the Motion before the House in 1902, and—if it applied to that Motion it equally applied to the Motion now before the House—the President of the Board of Trade said—

> "It suggests the termination of the debate by violent measures."

He could not do better before sitting down than quote the closing words of the Prime Minister in his speech in 1902. The right hon. Gentleman said—referring to the present Leader of the Opposition—

> "What is his cure for the ineffectiveness and impotence of Parliament? It is to suspend the privileges of the House of Commons. It is to institute government by executive decree, it is to take away the powers of Parliament."

Yet the right hon. Gentleman now came down to the House, with no ground at all to warrant his action, to bring before the House a complicated Motion, the effect of which would be to bring about exactly the state of things which he, in 1902, said ought never to obtain in Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman by means of this Motion would cripple freedom in debating measures of far-reaching importance: measures which were calculated from a socialistic point of view to do a large amount of mischief; and which, if once placed upon the Statute-book would result in such an amount of mischief in Scotland, as had already been brought about in Ireland, and destroy the peace of that at present peaceful and prosperous country.

MR. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks): I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Henry Forster*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow

REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford) rose to call attention to the present laws with regard to the registration of voters for Parliamentary and other purposes, and to move "That, in the opinion of this House the complexity and limitations of the laws regulating the registration of voters deprive large numbers of persons otherwise qualified to vote, of such right, and, therefore, it is urgently necessary that immediate steps be taken for the amendment of these laws." He said that the subject to which he desired to draw the attention of the House was not one which he could claim to be a new one nor did he expect he could put any novelty into it. It was one which had engrossed the attention of the House on many occasions, and while, perhaps, there had been some slight alteration from time to time in the registration laws of the country, there had been no drastic or far-reaching improvement in them from the point of view of those who desired simplicity. He hoped his Resolution would receive some amount of support from hon. Members opposite, because he knew they were keenly anxious that above all things, electoral reforms, whether in election laws or in the qualifications or the registration of voters, should be discussed not from a local standpoint but from the point of view of applying to the whole country. As he intended to deal with the question on that footing he expected that the Resolution would receive warm acceptance on the other side of the House. They had first of all to take their minds back to consider what was the object of the registration laws of the country. A simple definition would be to place upon the Parliamentary and other registers of voters all those persons who were duly qualified by the various qualifying or enfranchising Acts, and that this should be done by a system which was outside all party influence and control. So far back as 1868 a very important Committee had sat, over which Sir William Harcourt presided; he thought the Member for the Forest of Dean was perhaps the only Member of the House who was a Member of that Committee, and the definition as to the objects of registration which were put in the Report of that Committee was the clearest and most precise that could be given. It was—

> "The registration of voters is the business of the State, and ought to be placed as far as possible beyond the influence alike of the ignorance or apathy of the citizens, and the interested action of political agents."

Forty years had elapsed, and that ideal had not yet been realised. Some things had been done since then. He did not wish to ignore the important labours of the Committee which sat in 1878 and led to the Parliamentary and Municipal Registration Act of that year. But there was much more to be done. Some of the cases which had been tried under the Registration law were of the most amusing character. There had been a test case on a very much debated point in the Revision Court as to whether a man who had as part of a dwelling a bed-room, which was called a cubicle, was entitled to a vote, and in the case which settled that he had not they found that the applicant had a cubicle which was 12 ft. by 8, which was really a bedroom, and which had a door leading into a passage, and a window looking out into the open air. He was not qualified to go on the voters' list as an inhabitant of a dwelling house because the sides of the cubicle were only 7 feet high—that left a space of 5 feet between the top of the cubicle and the ceiling—and because he had the use in common of the passage, the ventilator, and the atmosphere which was made pure by the ventilator. Had he had an apartment the sides of which reached up to the ceiling and a more impure atmosphere he might have qualified. That was one of the vices of the law as it was at present. And then there were the serious and much disputed cases with regard to medical relief. It was time they got rid of such things as those. But the most important case, and that which raised in the clearest possible manner the question of the dwelling house apart from the lodger, was the famous case of Kent *v.* Fittal, which was known as the latchkey case. Anyone who had had practical experience in connection with the Registration Courts would say that the issue put before the Appeal Court in that case raised some of the best issues that could be raised and the decision come to was the clearest possible. A man named Frank Herbert occupied during the qualifying period an unfurnished room in a house at Devonport, for which he paid 3s. 8d. a week rent. The importance of the amount of rent was very great. He could not have applied to be put on the list as a lodger because a rental of £10 was a necessary qualification. It was a large house, the occupier of which sub-let to a number of tenants, himself occupying the lower portion of the house. There were no fewer than four others occupying in the same way as Herbert, and the point was put that he had a separate dwelling because he inhabited a certain part of the house exclusively apart from the common user of passages and other things. The case having been decided unfavourably to the tenant went to the Court of Appeal and the Master of the Rolls gave a very clear definition. He said—

> " On the whole it seems to me that the weight of authority in both countries is clearly in favour of the view that the fact that the landlord lives on the premises, under the conditions described in the case before us, does not exclude from the franchise as an inhabited occupier of a dwelling house a resident in a part of the premises who in other respects complies with the conditions imposed by the Act."

His colleagues agreed and both pointed out the invidious position in which a tenant would be if the mere fact of the landlord living in the house disqualified a man except there was some distinct control on the part of the landlord. He knew the question of control from practical experience. Lord Justice Romer drew the illustration of a man having two houses. Part of one in which he did not live became vacant and he moved into it. Up to this the persons occupying the various parts of the house occupied a dwelling house under the Act. Was the mere fact of the landlord's moving into the house, occupying himself only a portion which had recently been sublet. at once to alter the qualification of all the persons who had lived in it previously, their condition of living remaining identically the same as before? Lord Justice Mathew drew the illustration of a man who lived in and moved out of a house. In that case the lodgers became occupiers while if he moved in they became disqualified. Lord Justice Mathew put a very cogent point with regard to this discussion. He agreed with his colleagues and he distinctly said—

> " The object of the Acts of 1867 and 1878 was to give to the occupant of a part of a dwelling house the franchise which was previously confined to the occupant of an entire dwelling house."

He believed that was the intention of the law. The idea in the famous latchkey case was that a man having a latchkey and being able to go into the house could at once get free access to the rooms that he occupied and therefore had control of the dwelling in which he lived. In the bulk of buildings let out under these conditions a person who took unfurnished apartments had entire control of them the moment he shut his room door. The fact of some little common service over the parts that they used in common ought not to disqualify. He would like to find a lawyer who would give in a case outside registration a decision that a landlord could go and break down the door of an apartment. He had not control to do that for any other purposes than registration, but this construction had robbed many of the industrial classes of their right to get on the register. After inquiry from the landlord the town clerk of West Islington placed 2,000 of these people on the main list as occupiers. There was no party inquiry, but he was simply following up the ideal set in the passage he had read from the Report of 1868, stating that it was the duty of the local authority to place those people on the register independent of party. They were objected to, and the revising barrister, Mr. Paul Strickland, spent four days hearing six cases. One would have thought he was trying a question involving some immense amount of property or the life of a subject. To him it was most amusing that the revising barrister should take four days over cases in which all he had to decide was whether the landlord had some control as was laid down in the case of Kent *v.* Fittal. The revising barrister adjourned the Court, and did not appear again, but sent a deputy, Mr. Webster, who came to the Court and said that unless the person objected to and the landlord

Mr. Rowlands.

appeared in defence he would strike the names out, and forthwith he struck 2,000 names out. Now what was this revising barrister asking for? First of all he wanted the testimony of the tenant and then of the landlord. That meant that he wanted 4,000 people to come up to the Court. He would like to know how long the revising barrister would have had to sit to hear all those cases. That was only one action. There were 1,400 persons on the register who had been put on the year previously under the latchkey decision. They had moved and claimed for successive occupation which they had a perfect right to do having been put on as occupiers of dwelling houses. They claimed in succession, and in every one of those cases a printed statement signed by the landlord was produced stating that the applicant had full control. What was the result? The whole of these names were again struck off. No less than 3,400 persons were struck off who could not claim as lodgers. And these electors were debarred from participating in an election which took place while they were off the register. He was quite tired of the working classes being harrassed in this way, for no other class was harrassed in the same manner. In the cases he had mentioned the conditions laid down by the revising barrister were absolutely impossible for anyone to follow. He had been told of another case which was a rather serious one. The town clerk placed the latchkey voters on the list, but he put a distinguishing mark on the register against their names. He would like to know whether town clerks had power to put any such distinguishing marks on the register. He might add that in this particular case the revising barrister struck the names out. He considered that the door of the apartment occupied by those people roomed off was as sacred to them as the street door was to the superior landlord; and, unless there was some definite agreement which did not exist in ordinary hiring, the landlord could not enter the room he had let without obtaining the ordinary powers of the law. The Return of Parliamentary Voters for 1907 showed that there were 163,774 lodgers in England and Wales on the register. Let the House imagine what the number would be if they had them under another definition. Even that total did not represent the full total who ought to be on, because they had no successive occupation, and every time they moved they had again to go through the probationary period. If they were admitted to a qualification under a more simple definition, there would be a much larger number of them on the register. It might be said, "Surely they did not want to reduce the money qualification below £10 a year." Let them take, for example, the ordinary model dwellings or flats. Every portion was separately assessed as a dwelling house, and it was well known that there were many cases where the rent for that flat was as low as 2*s.* 6*d.* per week. Then there was the case of the agricultural labourer. They did not pay an excessively high rent, but their houses were separately assessed and carried the full qualification of an inhabited dwelling house. Therefore, the £10 a year qualification for lodgers was one of those things which ought to be swept away. Scotland had different machinery in regard to lodgers. He thought in what he had said he had made out a case to justify the amendment of the law. He had taken only typical cases. Some of his hon. friends had said that his Resolution was not sufficiently definite. He would remind hon. Members that he had sat in this House years ago, and he had had some experience of attempts at registration reform, and therefore he approached the question with more modest ideas as to what could be done. He would like to see some attempt at codification. He would probably be told that that was a very big order indeed. He knew it was rather a difficult thing to deal with some 108 Acts of Parliament, some of which went back to the Henrys, but nevertheless, he believed that a Bill of that kind would be acceptable to all parties in the House. He was not pressing the Government to bring in a big Bill. He remembered the Bills of 1893 and 1894, both of a comprehensive character, dealing with this question from different standpoints; but considering the high pressure of public life to-day, he was more inclined to ask for some small reform. He thought at least that the Government might consider whether they would not be able to get through some small Bill which would give them the benefit of the point decided in Kent *v.* Fittal and provide them with a clear definition of an inhabited dwelling house. The registration qualifying period at the present time was an absolute scandal. The facts were that the shortest time for anyone to get on the register was eighteen months, and it might be two and a half years. The average was two years. If they had a six months qualification the shortest period would be twelve months, the longest two years, and the average eighteen months. If they took the three months qualification, which he favoured, they could not get on under nine months. It might be twenty-one months. The average would be fifteen months, which was surely long enough. He was supposing that there would be no alteration in the present system of registration, but that they would simply amend the Act of Parliament with reference to the qualifying period, leaving the whole of the machinery as it existed at the present time. If time permitted he could show other anomalies. In a debate which took place in the early nineties the Leader of the Opposition said—

> "There is absolutely no difference of opinion in respect to the desire to see the present long time which may elapse between the day when a man becomes qualified and the day when he is allowed to exercise his vote lessened."

The money still necessarily spent by voluntary political associations was very heavy indeed. In Scotland, he believed they managed their business easier than they did in England. He had seen figures which he was almost afraid to quote in regard to the enormous cost of registration work throughout the country. And yet, but for the work done by voluntary political associations under the present system the registers would be in a very crude condition indeed. Another reform which he desired was the making of the qualifying periods somewhat analogous. If a nonconformist minister changed his residence he could not get on to the register in his new district without waiting the full qualifying period, while the rector got on by virtue of succession when he moved to another place. The freeholder got on the register in three months. These were illustrations of the absurdities. Then there were anomalies arising out of distances which required reform. Any person having business premises in a city and living within twenty-five miles of it were qualified, while with the person under the same £10 qualification in other boroughs and counties, it was necessary to live within seven miles of the qualifying property. The advocators of the plural voter should see to their indentures. There was only one real remedy for the whole of this, viz., the simplification of the qualification. He thought he had said enough to justify him in moving this Resolution. He could not conceive that any person could wish to continue in existence the anomalies which now existed. He hoped to see the time when they would get rid of all these anomalies and, coming down to flesh and blood, make the human being qualified, and then they would have a better state of things.

*MR. HIGHAM (Yorkshire, W.R., Sowerby) in seconding the Motion said he could not pretend to have the expert knowledge of this subject which was possessed by his hon. friend the Member for Dartford. He spoke as one who twenty-five years ago found it difficult to get on to the voting list himself. He had since then given a good deal of attention to the work of registration, and he knew the great difficulties which properly qualified electors had in getting their names on to the voting lists. The registration laws by their complexity excluded enormous numbers of men from the lists. If these laws were such as almost to bewilder the expert, how could the average man who desired to be put on the list be expected to understand them? There was, first of all, the owners' list, then Divisions 2, 3, 4*a*, 4*b*, and lodgers. That sounded pretty complicated, and he defied any ordinary man to find out where his name was on the lists which were exposed at the church doors. Division 1 of the occupiers' list was further complicated by having sub-classifications, namely, showing those having votes for Parliamentary, county council, municipal, and parochial elections. In Division 1 were included all male occupiers of dwelling-houses who had the voting power at Parliamentary, county council, municipal, and parochial elections. In Division 2 were the names of those who could vote at Parliamentary and parochial elections only; Division 3 included the names of female occupiers and others who could vote only at municipal, county council, and parochial elections; Division 4*a* included married women in business, those who could only vote at elections of parish councils and boards of guardians; and Division 4*b* included male voters who could only vote at these elections in a particular district, having the Parliamentary qualification in another parish. The lodgers' list showed perhaps the greatest anomalies of all. In the division in which he lived, out of 19,500 names on the lists, there was not one lodger, whereas in other constituencies there were lodgers by the thousand, and that was all owing to the vagaries of the revising barristers. In the rural districts 75 per cent. of the lists were quite inefficient. At the time of the Revision Courts, and in the haste with which the work was pushed through, it was no unusual thing for a list to be dropped out, and a whole section of people found themselves struck out for a whole year, and their votes disappeared entirely. He urged that some steps should be taken to secure the continuous registration of voters. The man was objected to, and there was no one to prove the validity of the objection. On one side the list was unduly swollen, and on the other it was too attenuated. He had gone through a row of eight houses in one case and found six of the householders belonging to one particular party and two to the other. Of the latter one was found qualified and the other not, but both were on the list; while of the other the whole six were found qualified, but only one of the six was on the list, because their political party could not pay an agent. When all the work was done three times over he held that the money was absolutely and wilfully thrown away. Everyone knew of the wrangles and disputes over the money spent on medical relief. He had known of a case where a poor woman received help during her confinement, and it was ruled that that was no disqualification to her husband's remaining on the voters list. In another case, however, where a coffin had been supplied for the voter's baby, although that cost less than the sums paid for the nurse in the other case, the man was disqualified and struck out of the list. In fact, the revising barristers were a law unto themselves. He would like to point out another source of waste of money, work, and temper. When a survey had been made in a Parliamentary division, from street to street and from house to house, the first record was therefore a list in walking order. But the revising barrister insisted upon its being turned into an alphabetical list when he was considering cases in his Revision Court. But it had for every election to be turned into street order, or, as it was usually expressed, "walking order." He thought that if the Local Government Board, or some other Government Department, issued rules in regard to all these matters a great deal of trouble and waste of money would be obviated. Then there was the case of Wesleyan and other ministers. There was little chance of their being placed on the register. He had known of one instance of a man who had been a minister for forty years of his life and had occupied for years house after house, but who had never been able to give a Parliamentary vote throughout his career. Why should they not take a lesson from the Colonies in this matter of registration? In New South Wales the police supplied all the information to the registration officer who made up the list. His own suggestions were: (1) that there ought to be a registration officer in every Parliamentary borough and county division; (2) that his work should be continuous, and every removal inserted on the list at once; (3) that the postmen knowing and calling on everyone, should collect and hand in through his office all information to be transmitted to the registration officer; (4) that there should be one list for all purposes in street order, and in three columns, issued half-yearly, and supplementary lists made for by-elections; (5) that the registrar as to deaths, the magistrates clerk as to prisoners, and the guardians' clerk as to inmates of the workhouse should all send in information to the registration officer. The result would be that there would be no revising barristers, no revision court, no wholesale objections, no party surveyor, and no party agents; and for the first time the poor man would not be handicapped but put on an equality with the rich. The amount of money saved would more than pay for the whole cost of the permanent registration officers for all the work undertaken by them. He had much pleasure in seconding the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the complexity and limitations of the Laws regulating the Registration of Voters deprive large numbers of persons otherwise qualified to vote of such right, and therefore it is urgently necessary that immediate steps be taken for the amendment of these Laws." — *(Mr. Rowlands.)*

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith) said the subject of the Resolution afforded a very pleasant evening's debate, but whether it would lead anywhere was very doubtful. He had been somewhat disappointed that the mover of the Resolution while pointing out many defects in the registration laws, had made no suggestion of a definite, practical plan for remedying those defects. Of course, the hon. Member knew that the law of England had been slowly and steadily built up, and he had no doubt that in the process a great many hard cases had arisen in the working of so complicated a matter as the franchise. The hon. Member had neither attacked the subject piecemeal, nor wholly altogether. It was impossible to alter or deal with registration apart from franchise. There ought to be some common basis for a voter's qualification, and it was from the existing differences of qualification that the present anomalies had arisen. The main question was whether a man living in a house was a lodger or an occupier, and it was true that the one political Party or the other was tempted to manufacture faggot votes under existing circumstances. The mover of the Resolution had said that the registration law should be codified, but he thought that that was a rather large order. It had also been argued that present date from which the qualification ran, 15th July, worked great hardship, but he thought that that date was fairer than 23rd June, the day before the Midsummer quarter day, proposed in a Bill discussed the other day. For his own part he was thoroughly in favour of shortening the time for being put on the register; he thought a three months' qualification was ample. The suggestion was made by the seconder that they should have officials to do this work, and it was certainly one which was thoroughly worthy of consideration. He thought they ought to find officials in each constituency, certainly in each large constituency, who should be responsible for the registers of voters. When they moved into a new borough and a quarter's rates became due, they found that they got an application for the rates for the time during which they had occupied, and he would like to see such an official empowered in a similar way to look after the votes, and the political parties on either side debarred by law from taking any part in registration work. It would save them all enormous expenditure, and the arrangement would be more satisfactory in every way. He would go further. He would pay the official a reasonable salary, say from £500 to £800 a year, and he would make him responsible for all the votes. If he left off a vote wrongfully, or maliciously, or negligently, he would take part of his salary away from him. Then again he would suggest that in the case of any dispute as to whether any really genuine applicant should go on the register, there might be an appeal to the local county court, and the County Court Judge could decide these registration court points. It would, therefore, be seen that, as one who had studied registration law for some considerable time, he believed that it would be for the benefit of all parties in the country if they could have some such modification as he had suggested. It would, no doubt, be a very drastic change, but he firmly believed that it would benefit all parties in this House, and he had never been able to find out any objection to such a course. If it were adopted, they would sweep away at one stroke all the complicated law on the subject, and they would put on, as the mover of the Motion stated, all those who were entitled to a vote—they would get on the list practically off hand. As to having a register compiled by the already heavily overworked postman, he was afraid that at the present time it would not be practicable. He was, therefore, in favour of the Resolution.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said that as one who, for several years, had to do with the work of registration, he desired to make a few observations in support of the Resolution before the House. He thought he was quite safe in saying that all who had had similar experience to his had been compelled to come to the conclusion that our electoral system was to-day both cumbersome and incomplete, and that it abounded with the most absurd and unjust anomalies. What did they find? Not only were our franchise laws seriously defective, but our registration system permitted the most glaring inequalities to exist. Unfortunately, our present system of registration struck most hardly at the great wage-earning sections of the community, for they all knew that it was very much easier for the propertied classes to obtain votes, by being placed upon the register, that it was made easier for them to duplicate their voting power, and that, on the other hand, it was made difficult for the wage-earner to get his name placed upon the register, while his subsequent disfranchisement was also made easy. The poor man had the greatest possible difficulty in this matter, as those who had been through the Revision Courts knew, and the poorer a man was, the more difficult it was for him to obtain the rights of citizenship. Not only did these difficulties arise from the diversity of the conditions and of the law covering our various qualifications, but they often arose, as the seconder had said, from the vagaries of the revising barrister. Instead of our having one simple qualification which anyone could understand, we had a great number. In fact, he thought he was safe in saying that no less than forty statutes directly applied to the various qualifications for registration in this country and the position of the ordinary elector was positively confusing. The more the ordinary elector sought to fathom the difficulties in connection with the registration system, the more bewildering did the whole system become to him, and much of the confusion arose from the different methods of procedure pursued in connection with the registration courts. For instance, a freeholder could claim to be placed on the register at the expiration of six months from a given date, but the leaseholder could not claim until the expiration of twelve months. The ownership voter once his name was placed on the register, so long as he retained that property need never trouble himself again; but, on the other hand, the old lodger if he retained exactly the same rooms for which he was registered, must take the trouble to claim each year, and was only allowed a certain number of days in which to deposit his claim. The occupier who, for Parliamentary purposes, generally went on Division 1 in the list, was placed in this position. He could claim after occupying premises, not the same premises, not the same dwelling-house; he might have occupied many dwelling-houses in the same constituency—he might claim the successive qualification so long as he was in the constituency during twelve months prior to the 15th July. But supposing that one of his removals, though he might have been on the register for many years, had taken him across a street, and he happened to go into another Parliamentary constituency, if he moved on the 16th day of July he must begin over again, and it would take him two years and five months before he had again the right to exercise the franchise as an occupier. Then there was the old lodger. He had, as he had already said, to make his claim within a given period—from 15th to 25th of July. The 20th July was the last day for making ownership claims; 20th August was the last day for new lodger and new occupier claims or successive occupier claims, and 5th September was the last day on which one could send in his declaration of misdescription to the clerk of the peace, or the clerk of the county council. With all this confusion about the matter, was it to be wondered at that they found, comparatively speaking, the number of working-class electors was small. He was quite sure of this, and it could not be a matter of surprise that wholesale disfranchisement was the result of this system. In fact, it appeared to him that it was actually inevitable. He found, going into the registration of last year, that out of an estimated population of something like 44,000,000 there were only 7,446,636 registered electors. These were divided as follows:—Owners, 618,252; occupiers, 6,554,393; lodgers, 202,187; freemen, 26,328; and University voters, 45,476. These figures, of course, included what were known as the pluralists and the faggot voters, and these two latter classes were to his mind the most unfair class of voters that we had upon the register. But their position was protected in every possible way and they went on multiplying by the thousand. These pluralists for no other reason than that they had held a forty shilling freehold for six months got upon the register, but the wage-earner had to live in his house for something like two years and five months before he had an equal right to have his name placed there. As to the faggot voter he was happy to say he was rapidly disappearing, but he was still a disgrace to our registration system. He remembered perfectly well that in one of the districts he had to take care of years ago, in a colliery constituency, they had more faggot voters than they had occupiers in the district. They had colliery houses valued at £6 10s., and for each of these colliery houses there were three electors other than the occupier, and the only thing that entitled them to continue to have their vote was the faggot. This £6 10s. was divided amongst three of them and had been purchased for no other reason than that they could come into that constituency and out-vote the regular voters. These faggot voters existed, he was sorry to say, in the country to far too great an extent, and when they remembered how easy it was for pluralists and faggot voters to get on the register and contrasted it with the case of the ordinary occupier, he thought they could not but welcome the Resolution which had been brought before the House. In reference to this matter, he thought he was right in saying that the hon. Member for the Walton Division of Liverpool, in a debate in this House, made the admission that at the last General Election no less than 400,000 of these pluralists exercised the franchise. The hon. Member for Hammersmith had twitted the mover of the Resolution because he had failed to bring before the House the course which he would like to see the Government adopt. He wished to make one or two suggestions on that head. He did not agree with the mover of the Resolution when he suggested that there should be a small Bill—he thought that was the term he used. This was far too comprehensive an affair and far too great a change and there were far too many anomalies which ought to be swept away, to be dealt with by any small Bill. He thought he might be able to show his hon. friend the Member for Dartford before he sat down that he at any rate had not kept pace with what had been the acknowledged Liberal policy on this subject for very many years. First of all, he suggested that the whole of the present system, which was nothing but a tangle, should be swept away. What was wanted in this country was one simple franchise. He believed there never had been so many representatives in this House in favour of adult suffrage, and, notwithstanding what had recently been taking place, in favour of that adult suffrage including women. Therefore, he thought they ought to have one simple qualification, which should be given to a man not for what he had, but for what he was. Then there should be enacted the shortest briefest qualification of a residential character that was consistent with registration. In his opinion, far too much power was at the present time placed in the hands of the registration agents of all parties concerned. His experience justified him in saying that the men most looked after in connection with the registration by the particular agents were those who occupied a most prominent position in the subscription list of the Party organisations. It was of course not to be wondered at, but Party agents should not be tempted to look after one set of men more than another. The procedure in different courts varied considerably, and some were prepared to recognise that a person who was misdescribed by somebody else owing to a technicality ought not to be penalised by the act of the man who misdescribed him. On the other hand, a well-known local supporter of a Party if misdescribed was very soon looked after by the Party agent, and in consequence there arose a temptation on the part of the agents to take up towards these fellows a position which was grossly unfair. As he had said, he thought he would be able to prove to the mover of this Motion that he had not in this matter kept pace with the declared resolution of the Liberal Party. He had asked for a short Bill, but the resolution passed at the meeting of the Liberal Federation at Derby twelve years ago declared that the period of qualification should be reduced to three months; and that the conditions of registration should be simplified by providing for successive occupation from one Parliamentary division to another. That was one of the most important points that could be included in any proposal for reform. There was nothing more shameful than that a man by removing from one side of a street to the other should have to wait two years and five months before he was entitled again to a Parliamentary vote. The resolution of the Federation also provided that there should be succession from one qualification to another. For instance, a man might be on the list as a lodger, and instead of immediately passing on to the register as an occupier, he had, when he became an occupier, to qualify afresh, and for a certain period between the expiration of the time when he was listed as a lodger and the end of his qualifying period and the making up of the register in which he appeared as a qualified occupier, he was a disfranchised citizen. The resolution of the Federation also suggested the appointment of a public registration official for each Parliamentary division. That was one of the most needed and desirable reforms in connection with registration. He could give many instances of the unfair proceedings taken by opposing agents against innocent electors, but one would suffice. He received for a man a form of objection which had been received from the opposing agent in the constituency in which he was interested. He made it his business, seeing that the objection was based on a mere technicality, to go several miles to see the elector. The elector told him to his surprise that he had received a note from the opposing agent stating that he (Mr. Henderson) had sent the objection. That letter was accompanied by another form and a request to the elector to make a new claim. The result was that in the end the elector was retained on the register, and his own agent had to put before the association figures in which this man's name appeared as a successful objection and a successful claim, and all that was done by the one agent. That was how the figures were multiplied. The last point he desired to make was that there ought to be no disqualification because a man had received temporary relief under the Poor Law. This principle, he was glad to say, had been recognised in one or two statutes passed recently, and he was glad to know that the President of the Local Government Board stood out and kept it out of the Bill in connection with the feeding of the children. He hoped that in this case the disqualification would be done away with, because in his experience he knew of most distressing cases where men who, owing to want of employment, had had to take temporary relief and had in consequence been disqualified for two or three years, often without knowing it. He appealed to the Government not to be carried away by the arguments of the mover of this Motion and attempt to deal with the matter with a temporary and short Bill. He hoped that even if it took up the greater part of a session the Government would deal with it by a bold and comprehensive scheme in which registration was placed on the simplest possible basis and the qualification cut down to the shortest possible period; a scheme which would make a reality of representative government in this country, of government by the democracy, by giving the people the rights to which they were entitled.

Sir HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth) said that, as had been pointed out by the last speaker, this was not a subject that could be dealt with by a little Bill. It was only a small part of a very large subject. He certainly thought the residential qualification should be shortened and many improvements made in other directions. But all the difficulties which this Motion desired to set right were all connected with getting on to the register in the future all persons entitled to be there. But their position was not to be compared with that of the voters who were already on the register, but whose numbers in the constituency were so enormous that the representation they had was totally inadequate. His purpose therefore in rising was rather to enlarge the Resolution before the House by adding at the end words that would ensure that such amendments of the law as the Resolution proposed should be accompanied by a re-distribution of seats. Who was it who suffered most—those who were delayed in getting on the register for a year, or those who, like the members of his own constituency which numbered 36,000 qualified voters actually registered, had a vote, but whose vote was of no use, because they had not adequate representation? These persons could not make themselves heard even if a Bill were brought in aimed at their lives, because of the inadequacy of their representation. The existing state of things showed very conclusively that the majority of the Members of the House of Commons represented only minorities of the electors, and therefore, it could not be certain that the decisions of the House could ever be the exact will of the people. He hoped the Bill he was about to introduce would be suported by Gentlemen opposite in greater numbers even than those on his own side. There were two Members opposite and himself who represented 120,000 electors. Somewhere else in the House there were thirty-five Members who represented only the same number. It was clear, therefore, that the majority on any decision that the House came to could only by accident, if at all, represent the majority of the people of the country. He hoped the mover and seconder of the Resolution would feel the same sympathy towards his Amendment as he had expressed for the terms of their substantive Motion and that he would have their support. After all, the whole thing was perhaps only a pious Resolution, though he hoped it would be carried into effect, and that they might even yet divest it of any feeling of partisanship, and before very long induce the Government to have an all-round conference of representative Members to examine the question with the addition he proposed. This did not touch the question of the suffrage, though neither he nor, he believed, any Member of the House was afraid to face the question of plural voting, or "One man, one vote," as against "one man, one value." He believed the subject would have to be grappled with, and the sooner they got to close quarters with it the better. He therefore moved the Amendment which he had handed to the Speaker.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) said that in seconding the Amendment he entirely agreed, after a very long experience in the Revision Courts, that there were a great number of absurd and unjust anomalies in our registration laws. He thought few would be inclined to quarrel with the words of the Motion, especially if the Amendment was added to it. It was so wide and vague that he supposed it was cast out as a net to try and catch fish. It was so vague that it meant nothing apart from the Amendment. At a time when so many great social problems were pressing upon their attention, it was almost absurd for an hon. Member drawing an early place in the ballot to spend a whole evening in discussing an academic Motion such as this, which was much more suitable to a debating society than to the House of Commons. They all agreed that the registration laws wanted amending, but he hoped in the heart of the mover of the Resolution there was no lurking and sinister desire to take away votes from men who had a right to have them. On the face of it, however, the Motion seemed fair enough, and he had little doubt that it would be accepted, though apart from the Amendment it did not take into its scope practical measures for dealing with the whole problem in the way it ought to be dealt with. They wanted no little Bill, and no little Motion. What they wanted was a large and comprehensive measure, which he hoped the Government would bring in, dealing with the whole question of registration and of the representation of the people. The latter was certainly the most glaring injustice of all in connection with this large and wide question. The borough of Newry, in Ireland, had only 2,050 electors. He was not surprised to find that the Member for that borough was not in his place, and he was not surprised to find so few Nationalist Members present to listen to what must be a painful matter to them. The hon. Member was returned by 802 votes. In Essex, Walthamstow Division, there were 37,826 voters, and the Member was returned by 21,534 votes. There was even a more glaring example. The Romford Division of Essex had 47,641 voters, and the hon. Member for Kilkenny had 1,584 votes. That was not "one man, one vote," but "one vote and another man more than thirty votes." That was a far greater and larger injustice than the comparatively small matters dealt with under this small Motion. They wanted to have done with these small Bills and small Motions, and with the humbug that had always surrounded this question of the representation of the people; they wanted the Government at once to have the courage to face this problem, backed as they would be by the Labour and Conservative Parties if they went on reasonable and fair lines. On these terms he was sure they would achieve far more useful legislation than by many of the measures with which they were now wasting the time of Parliament.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'but such amendment ought to be accompanied by arrangements for the better representation of all voters by a redistribution of seats.'"—(*Sir Henry Kimber.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) said that Motions in favour of the reform of registration had been adopted by both political parties with almost unanimity in each case. It might be inferred from that circumstance that the subject was non-controversial. Unfortunately, the fact that a Motion was non-controversial did not always mean that effect could be given to it without any controversy. They saw in this debate how controversy could be carried into a subject with which every one professed to be in complete sympathy. The question was closely associated with others as to which there was not the same unanimity of approval. There were the questions of the qualification of voters, of the franchise, plurality of votes, and now the question of redistribution introduced by the Amendment. Such a subject as this was liable to the danger of expansion; its friends sought to expand it because they believed the principle good; its enemies, because they wished to associate the principle with controversial matter, and thereby destroy it. The Government were entirely in sympathy with those who demanded a bold Bill, but it did not thereby follow that the Government would be able immediately to do what they wanted. When one looked at this Motion there was only one word which would give to any Front Bench man any pause, and that was the word "immediate." He took it that the word "immediate" in the Resolution meant as soon as possible. They could not have a Bill more immediately than the earliest possible moment. Construed in that sense the Government entirely accepted his hon. friend's Resolution. But they would not confine themselves to the mere question of possibility; he thought he could say that as early as practicable the object of the Motion would form the subject matter not merely of consideration, but of legislation. The evil was one they had long admitted. The various speakers had dwelt upon the defective details in the registration law. To show how defective our registration and franchise laws were he pointed out that, while there were 7,250,000 voters now on the register, if we had 25 per cent. of the population on the register, as we might well expect to have, the number of voters would be 10,000,000. France had 27 per cent. of its population upon the electorate roll, but unfortunately in France they had not so great a proportion of children in the population. The fault of this low percentage was not to be entirely attributed to defective registration, because there were many defects in the franchise. Among the many grave defects in the franchise and registration laws was the length of the qualifying period. That was a very serious thing. It had already been pointed out that if a voter entered upon his household qualification in July he had to wait for nearly twelve months before he could commence his qualifying period. According to the present law he must have twelve months occupation before 15th July immediately prior to the period in which the register was made up. The result was that very nearly two and a half years might elapse before the taxpayer could obtain a vote, Then, too, the choice of date from which the qualification was to run was very inconvenient. 15th July was just after the Midsummer quarter, when a great many removals took place, so that a large number of persons were disfranchised for the *maximum* period permitted by law. In any Bill the Government might produce they would certainly have to provide for a date more generally convenient. He thought every one was agreed that the register ought to be brought earlier into force. There was another matter very effective in keeping people off the register, and that was successive occupation. Successive occupation within the same borough was permitted, but a man could not count his qualifying period outside the borough as well as inside. Again, if he began his period as a lodger, and afterwards became a householder, he could not count the first period. The real difficulty arose from our cumbrous, complicated, and unnecessarily numerous qualifications. We could only simplify registration by simplifying the franchise. The way to simplify all registration was to have a uniform residential franchise. He though the hon. Member for Barnard Castle was scarcely doing justice to the hon. Member when he said that he was not up to date. After all, the only way adequately to simplify the law of registration was to have a uniform residential franchise. But no one could say that

that would be a very simple matter. It would be difficult to imagine a Registration Bill which did not deal with the difficulty which had arisen as to lodgers or inhabitant occupiers. The hon. Member for Barnard Castle referred to the case in which it was decided that, in order to be an inhabitant occupier, it did not matter whether the landlord resided on the premises. In old days it was frequently held that the mere fact of the landlord's residing on the premises showed the claimant was a lodger. The court now said it was not enough to show whether the landlord lived on the premises; the question was the amount of control. The House might ask: Why should a claimant trouble whether he was a lodger or an inhabitant occupier? The difference was very material. If he were a lodger, he had to show a £10 qualification; and he had to renew his claim each year at considerable inconvenience. He escaped these two disadvantages if he became an inhabitant occupier.

MR. ROWLANDS: And the lodger has no successive occupation.

SIR W. ROBSON said the decision which had been referred to was greatly in favour of the inhabitant occupier, because it said that merely showing the landlord lived on the premises would not prove that the claimant was a lodger—he might be an inhabitant occupier. Then there came another case in which it was said that the fact of the landlord living on the premises established a *prima facie* case or presumption that the claimant was a lodger. That greatly belittled the value of the preceding decision. The effect had been to leave the question of fact in nearly every case to the discretion of the revising barrister. That was an unsatisfactory state of the law. He thought it would be difficult exactly to define the difference as a matter of law in a way that would be applicable to all cases, but some attempt should certainly be made. There was another way of dealing with the mischief which would certainly be considered by the Government. At present, if a man claimed as an inhabitant occupier and was found to be a lodger, or if he claimed as a lodger and was found to be an inhabitant occupier, his claim lapsed altogether, because it was too late to put in another claim. He thought the revising barrister, or some other authority, should be able to put him on the right list if it was found that he had claimed in respect of the wrong list. That would take the sting out of many of the decisions that had been so adverse to the franchise. All that might be remedied, but they came back to the plain, broad fact, that they would never have a satisfactory registration law until they had a simple franchise. The existence of many different franchises gave rise to electoral devices which might be described as ingenuity carried to an undue extent. An hon. friend of his, who represented a county division in the north, had told him that in the course of his election he was surprised to find that many of his opponents were purchasing graves in the cemetery, where land was extremely expensive, and they were thus quite legitimately becoming entitled to exercise extra votes. Others, of a more cheerful frame of mind, instead of buying graves, took a theatre and became shareholders of particular portions of it, and thus became entitled to a vote. Thus the cemetery and the theatre contributed to swell the poll. Another suggestion of great value had been made—namely, that the whole business of registration should be made as far as possible an affair of the State. That was eminently desirable. He believed it would be an enormous gain to the public life of England if the various political parties were able to devote their time and energies more to the education of the electors than to the work of registration. The work before any Government touching this subject was difficult. It would require a great Parliamentary effort, and it might mean a series of Parliamentary efforts. He doubted whether the object of the mover would ever be achieved until the House of Commons was in a position to give effect to its own will in matters relating to its own constitution. But so far as the matter depended on the Government, he thought the House might rest assured that they would do all in their power, at the earliest practical opportunity, to give effect to the objects of the Motion.

SIR F. BANBURY, who was received with cries of "Divide," said he was sorry that in some quarters there was no desire to hear the views of gentlemen on both sides of the House on what had been described as a non-party question. He did not know whether hon. Members who cried "Vote" had a material objection in their mind. He might be permitted, in his presumption, to congratulate the Attorney-General on his first appearance in the high office which he now occupied, and which he was sure the hon. Gentleman was calculated to adorn. He could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that they on that side of the House were all glad to see him in that position, and they felt confident that he would fill it in the distinguished manner which his predecessor had done. The Attorney-General had declared that it was impossible to say what view a revising barrister would take on a point of registration law, for it was very difficult to say what view any member of the legal profession would take on any point of law. He had followed the proceedings of the revising barristers with some care, and his view was that they had always given their judgments to the best of their ability and belief, and he was not sure that they could find a better tribunal. He was not a member of the legal profession, nor was he there with a brief to defend its interests, but he confessed he had been surprised to hear of some of the decisions which had been given by the revising barristers. The Attorney-General had remarked on the very considerable difference there was between the local government franchise—the franchise for the parish or county council—and the Parliamentary franchise. That was quite true. He would point out that women were admitted to the local government franchise. Did he understand the hon. and learned Gentleman to advocate their admission to the Parliamentary franchise? [Sir W. ROBSON shook his head.] He was glad he had risen, for he had obtained a very important piece of information. If he had not intervened it might have gone forth that the new Attorney-General was in favour of female suffrage. It was very important in view of what was going on that he should have put in an unequivocal light the opinion of the Attorney-General on this question. Then the Attorney-General said that great hardship took place because the period of qualification for registration terminated on 15th July at the present moment. That was quite true, but he would ask him whether great hardship would not arise if the period of qualification terminated in any other quarter. He had represented a populous constituency for thirteen and-a-half years, and he thought he was correct in saying that there were removals on every quarter-day, and that

15th July did not make any great difference. He was not including, of course, moonlight flittings, or Friday night flittings. He was endeavouring to point out to the House that removals occurred on every quarter-day, and they were not confined to those in which the 15th of July occurred, or any other quarter. The Leader of the Labour Party had made an eloquent speech in which he said that there were a number of people who were disqualified by the receipt of a little temporary relief and who, in many cases, did not know that they had received that temporary relief from the Poor Law. He could not understand how a person could receive temporary relief without knowing it. He must know that he had received it, and such an argument as that must fall to the ground. He supposed the intention of the hon. Gentleman was that Poor Law relief should not disqualify men from having a vote, and no doubt there were a great many deeply sincere people who desired that that state of things should be brought about. But, on the other side, there was an equal number or even a greater number of people who sincerely thought that the receipt of Poor Law relief should be an estoppel against a man receiving a vote, and he should endeavour to show that that reasoning was right. He was supposing that old-age pensions had not become law, and he thought they were in the dim and distant future. [Cries of "No, no."] Well, there was a difference of opinion on that point, but supposing they allowed persons in receipt of Poor Law relief to exercise the franchise the result would be that when an hon. Member went down to his constituency to address the free and independent electors, the first thing that would happen would be that a number of the free and independent electors would get up and say: "We are in receipt of outdoor relief; we receive 5s. a week; we should like to receive 6s.; now when you go back to the House of Commons if we return you, will you promise to vote for a measure which will give us 6s. a week instead of 5s.?" [Cries of "No, no."] Hon. Members said "No," but everybody must know that that sort of pressure was put on Members of the House of Commons by all the members of the Civil Service, whether they were postmen or higher officials. When he had the honour of representing Peckham he continually received letters from members of the Civil Service pointing out to him the grievances under which they suffered. He was not referring to postmen or to people occupying what he might call without offence the lower grades of the Civil Service, but to officials getting £200, £300, or £400 a year. They were all suffering under grievances, and it was human nature to suffer under grievances. He was not at all sure that the hon. Gentleman who had recently succeeded to his high office was not also suffering from a grievance, because he remembered that some years ago the fees of the law officers of the Crown were cut down. Therefore the hon. Gentleman had a grievance. [Sir W. ROBSON dissented.] Well, if the Attorney-General had no grievance, he evidently was one of those estimable men who sacrificed themselves for the good of their country, but the tendency of human nature was for men to get all they could, and he objected to men, whose only object in life was to get relief out of the Poor Law, having a part in saying who should govern this great Empire. The Leader of the Labour Party was a little unkind to the hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House, because he said that the country was tired of the humbug of registration, but, after all, the last Franchise Bill which included a Registration Bill was passed by a Radical Government in 1885, and therefore he thought the hon. Gentleman was a little severe on those gentlemen who occupied office at the present moment, and who were so anxious to do everything they could to oblige the Labour Party. In the year 1892 he made a personal canvass of the Peckham Division, and called upon 5,000 electors. [Hear, hear.] It took him a very considerable time, and as an hon. Gentleman below the gangway said "Hear, hear" he might say that whatever else the electors of Peckham did the majority of them were exceedingly glad to see him personally. He found a considerable number of them said they had no feeling in politics at all, that they found one side was as bad as the other, and that they got nothing out of either side. They said that they had a considerable trouble to make both ends meet, that their time was occupied, and that they did not wish to waste any of it in discussing politics with a benighted Tory or a benighted Liberal. That being so, it was evident that the difficulties of the franchise lay not with the laws, but with the people themselves. That was to say, that there were a number of people who would not take advantage of the possibility which they had of placing their names on the roll of voters, but avoided doing so. There was some reason for their not desiring to become enrolled on the voters list, as there were certain obligations which were not always agreeable to the citizens of the country. It was true that it gave them the right to vote for an hon. Gentleman opposite or for an hon. Member below the Gangway or for himself, but there were some foolish people who thought that that privilege was counterbalanced by the fact, that being on the roll of voters, they had to become jurymen and they would rather not serve on a jury, and would sooner give up their vote. He thought that was a foolish view for a voter to take, but there was no denying that it existed, and whatever Parliament did—he was going to say it could not compel a man to become an elector against his inclination, but he would not say that, because after what had happened he was not at all certain whether the Party opposite were not capable of compelling a man to do anything whether it was against his inclination or interest or not so long as it coincided with their views at the moment. Therefore, he withdrew that observation, because he thought it was possible for the Radical Party to make a man become an elector whether he liked it or not. He had not had the privilege of listening to the hon. Member who had introduced the Resolution, and he much regretted it, but he was told that the hon. Member had not been very definite with regard to his remedies. If that were true, the best thing they could do was to vote for the Amendment of his hon. friend. If there was to be any alteration in the franchise laws, the alteration should include redistribution. He, under those circumstances, would vote for the Amendment, and if it was lost he would vote against the Motion.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said that, after the almost contemptuous manner in which the hon. Member who moved the Amendment had referred to small constituencies, it required some courage on the part of the representative of such a small constituency as that which he represented to intervene in the debate at all, but he thought the hon. Member for Wandsworth would allow that small constituencies, so long as they existed, might be trusted to consider carefully the questions which came before them and that their Members should speak up. The point he wished to draw attention to arose out of the fact that during the last registration season he attended all the courts of the revising barrister in his own constituency. He noticed that cases continually cropped up where the revising barrister seemed to have a difficulty as well as a discretion in deciding the claim which was put forward. If a man came forward and said he was a lodger, paying £10 a year, it was within the discretion of the revising barrister to say that could not be so, because the rental of the house was probably only £10, and there could not therefore be a lodger claim as well as an occupier claim. That did not appear to him to be a right way of deciding these matters, because it was well known that in many parts of the country a man who only required a portion of a house had to pay relatively for such portion, far more than he would have to pay for the whole. There might well be a £10 lodger in a house hardly worth £10. He brought, however, no charge against any revising barrister, because he was bound to say that revising barristers as a class were extremely careful, moderate, and just in the way they exercised their discretion and certainly that was the case with the revising barrister in his own division. Then there was a point with regard to the votes of the ministers of free churches. Owing to the time that was now necessary in which to qualify it was practically impossible for ministers of certain communions to get a vote, because by the rules of some of the churches they were continually passed from one district to another before they could qualify. He hoped that point would receive attention when this question was dealt with. He was sorry to hear the Attorney-General say that the question was only to be dealt with by a comprehensive Bill, because he believed that this was one of those cases in which, if they waited until they got all, instead of taking a little at a time, they would end by getting nothing at all.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 31 ; Noes, 129. (Division List, No. 8.)

AYES.

Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beach, Hn. Michael HughHicks
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt.Hon. VictorC.W.
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, E. Hildred
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt.Hon.Col.W.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Valentia, Viscount
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES, Sir Henry Kimber and Mr. T. L. Corbett.

NOES.

Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Bllen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Aaker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James

Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crossley, William J.
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Duckworth, James
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lever,A.Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Montagu, E. S.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomasson, Franklin
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampton
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES, Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House, the complexity and limitations of the Laws regulating the Registration of Voters deprive large numbers of persons otherwise qualified to vote of such right, and therefore it is urgently necessary that immediate steps be taken for the amendment of these Laws.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL.

Order for the Second Reading read.

*MR. R. PEARCE (Staffordshire, Leek) in moving the Second Reading said that the object of the Bill was to promote the earlier use of daylight in the summer. It was not necessary for him to praise the early morning when the morning stars sang together with joy and all the poets from then till now had praised it. The late Thomas Moore, who lived in the Leek Division, had said no doubt with reference to this Bill—

> "Give me back the wild sweetness of morning,
> Its smiles and its tears are worth evening's
> best light."

He had explained the very provisions of this Bill prophetically when he said—

> ". . . the best of all ways
> To lengthen our days
> Is to steal a few hours from the night."

He took it for granted that the advantage of using the early hours of the morning for all purposes of work and play could not be questioned by anybody.

And, it being Eleven o'clock the debate stood adjourned.

Adjourned at Two minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 13th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners, that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with. Barry Railway [H.L.]; Highgate Hill Tramways [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway [H.L.]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway [H.L.]

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for additional provision in the following Bill. London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill —Petition of Messrs. Durnford and Company, of 315, Caxton House, Westminster, London, praying that Standing Order No. 86A may be dispensed with, and that the Bill may be read a first time; read, and ordered to lie on the Table, and Standing Order No. 86A to be considered on Monday next, in order to its being dispensed with.

Interoceanic Railway of Mexico Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Presented, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CROWN JEWELS COMMISSION (IRELAND).

Appendix to the Report of the Viceregal Commission appointed to investigate the circumstances of the loss of the Regalia of the Order of St. Patrick, and to inquire whether Sir Arthur Vicars exercised due vigilance and proper care as the custodian thereof; minutes of evidence. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Order made by the town council of the borough of Taunton, fixing the hours of closing for certain shops within the borough. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC BILLS.

Return respecting: Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of the 30th January last), and to be printed. (No. 12).

NEW BILL.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS (SCOTLAND BILL) [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the law with respect to small holdings and allotments in Scotland. Was presented by the Earl of Camperdown; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 13)

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY SCHEME.

*LORD AMPTHILL: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War—(1.) Whether he is yet in a position to define exactly the duties of secretaries of County Associations under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act in view of the prevailing uncertainty as to whether those duties are to be purely administrative or partly executive; (2.) Whether each unit of the Territorial Army will be obliged to hold its annual camp within the area of the County Association to which it belongs, or whether inland corps will still be allowed to go to seaside camps; (3.) Whether recruiting for each unit will be restricted to the area of the County Association to which that unit belongs, or whether the present custom will be allowed to continue at least so far as the preference of individual recruits is concerned; (4.) Whether it is finally decided that separation allowances will only be granted to non-commissioned officers. My Questions need a little explanation, but a very few words will suffice. They have to do with certain points concerning which doubt exists or apprehension has arisen, to which, as chairman of a County Association, I have had my attention called. The existence of those doubts and of that apprehension is, so far as the

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

experience of my own small county shows, a very material hindrance to the proper development of the Territorial Army scheme.

The first Question relates to the duties of the secretaries of County Associations, and its importance lies in the fact that it is very difficult to select a man for an appointment unless and until you can tell him what his duties will be. Now, in regard to the duties of secretaries of County Associations two sets of opinion exist. There are some who, interpreting very literally the phrase in the Act which says that the County Associations are to raise the Territorial Army, regard the secretaries as recruiting officers, and have an idea that the secretaries will have to do very much what was done by individuals at the time of the South African War. They conceive that the secretary will be a species of itinerant recruiting officer, for, since they believe it to be the duty of the Association to find, enlist, and keep the men—and it is pretty obvious that the members of the Association cannot go about in a body to perform this duty—that duty will devolve on the secretary.

Those who hold a different view regard the County Association as an administrative body, the deputy of the War Office, in fact a miniature War Office for the county to which it belongs, and believe that it will exercise purely administrative functions analogous in every way to the functions of the War Office from which they are delegated. Those who hold this view regard the secretary merely as a scribe, the right-hand man of the chairman of the Association, and they hold that he will have nothing more to do personally with the actual enlisting of men than the clerk of a county council has to do with the inspection of insanitary areas or the inspection of the schools within his county. The House will readily believe —and I feel sure most of your Lordships have met with a similar experience—that it is extremely difficult, indeed impossible, to decide upon the choice of a secretary until this doubt has been removed and we are in a position to say exactly what the secretary will have to do.

It is possible that the noble Earl the Under-Secretary will tell me that this is a matter which will be left to the discretion of the County Associations, and that if they like to choose an active man, who will run about every day and all day and assist in the work of recruiting, they will be at liberty to do so; but I very earnestly hope that this will not be his answer. I hope that the conception of the Territorial Army scheme which exists in the mind of the Secretary of State is so consistent and so clear that homogeneous principles will be laid down for the whole country. The want of a clear understanding in regard to the line between administrative and executive functions in military matters has led to more than one great controversy, and notably to that great controversy which convulsed the whole system of government in India a few years ago, and led to deplorable results, of which it will take a long time to remove the traces. I can well imagine that there might be many very serious storms in tea-cups in the various counties if a similar confusion on a small scale were to exist in regard to the duties of the secretary.

My next Question is a simple one, but one of considerable importance. To many Volunteers the only attraction of volunteering, the only circumstance which enables them to make the sacrifices necessary to discharge this patriotic duty, is the complete change of air which they get at a seaside camp, or in some place of which the climate and surroundings are entirely different from their own place of residence. To many Volunteers the annual training is the only holiday, and unless that holiday can be made a real holiday it would not be worth their while, or, to put it, perhaps, in the more correct way, it would be impossible for them to make the necessary sacrifices which are entailed by joining the Volunteers. In my own county there is a very fine Engineer Volunteer Corps, and it is a fact that at the present time resignations are coming in far more quickly than they ought to be at this period of the year, and there is a considerable hesitation about transferring to the Territorial Army, solely on account of the doubt which exists as to whether the seaside camp will be allowed to continue, or whether they will have to go to some inland brigade camp. That is my justification for troubling the Under-Secretary and for detaining your Lordships. I have endeavoured to obtain information from less exalted sources, but I find that nothing short of an authoritative statement from the fountain head will satisfy those who are addressing their inquiries to me.

The third Question is an analogous one, which, perhaps, I may best illustrate by an example. In my own county of Bedfordshire one of the companies of the Infantry Volunteer Corps is recruited partly in the neighbouring county of Buckinghamshire. The men of these two counties belong to a homogeneous district, which is kept together by considerations entirely independent of county boundaries. It has been the custom for these men to associate together for volunteering and a species of comradeship has sprung up. Besides that, there is the habit they have got of doing their drill in certain places to which they have convenient access. Here, again, a doubt has arisen as to whether this arrangement will be allowed to continue, and whether Buckinghamshire men will be permitted to join the Bedfordshire Volunteers. The result of this feeling is that many men are already declaring that they will be unable to join the Territorial Army if they are taken away from their old comrades, and not allowed to do their training under the same conditions.

Lastly, I ask whether it is finally decided that separation allowances will be granted only to non-commissioned officers. I need hardly detain your Lordships by pointing out that the conditions of service in the Volunteers are necessarily so different from those which obtain in the Regular Army, that it is not possible to enforce those distinctions between the non-commissioned rank and the privates which are desirable and which raise no question in the Regular Army. The non-commissioned officer in the Volunteers is not, necessarily, the best man. Other circumstances come into the consideration, and the very conditions of service make it impossible for a large number to look forward to regular promotion to the non-commissioned ranks. To these men who are privates in the infantry, or sappers in the Engineers, it is difficult to discern a reason why a married man who has four or five children should not get the separation allowance just the same as his comrade who happens to be a non-commissioned officer, and who may not have served for a longer period. That is all I have to say, and I hope that the noble Earl will be able to give definite replies to these Questions, for I can assure him that, at any rate so far as my own county is concerned, the existing doubt is causing a good deal of disquietude in regard to the success of the Territorial Army scheme.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of PORTSMOUTH): My Lords, in reply to Question 1, regarding the duties of the secretaries of County Associations, I would like to point out to my noble friend that the relations between the Army Council and the Associations preclude the exact definition by the Council of the secretary's duties. The Army Council, in their desire to give the Territorial Force as free a hand as possible, have decentralised its administration so far as is compatible with military efficiency. They have laid down at some length in Chapter 2 of the Act the duties of County Associations. The secretary, though his appointment must be approved by the Army Council, is the servant not of the Council but of the County Association. We look upon him, so to speak, as the special machine to carry out effectively the resolutions and decisions of the Association in the exercise of their functions.

The duties of the various Associations naturally must differ very materially in various details, and I do not think it would be possible for the Army Council or for the Secretary of State, or for any central authority, to attempt to lay down any hard and fast rules. I should be sorry to see such a task imposed upon the Army Council. Even if the Army Council were desirous of doing this, they could not do so with any satisfaction or with any reasonable chance of success. The circumstances of each Association are different, and we should be immediately accused of just that kind of undue War Office interference which has been, I think rightly, resented by the Volunteers in the past. The very semblance of this we are anxious to avoid as far as possible. Each association, in our opinion, must order its own affairs. It is a self-contained organisation with certain defined powers and responsibilities, and it is for each Association to utilise the services of their paid secretary in whatever directions they think most conducive to the proper performance of their duties.

In reply to Question 2 there will not be a definite obligation on any unit of the Territorial Force to hold its annual camp within the County Association area. The selection of annual camps will, as in the past, be left in the hands of the general officers commanding-in-chief, acting through the major-generals of divisions. It is the desire of the Army Council that, wherever possible, the wishes of the units should be gratified in this respect. My noble friend will, I am sure, quite understand the importance of the annual camp from the training or strictly military standpoint, but, so far as is compatible with this requirement, he may rest assured that no undue opposition to the wishes of units will be entertained, as the Army Council and the general officers commanding fully appreciate the spirit of sacrifice shown by the Volunteer, who, in many cases, gives up his annual holiday to the annual camp.

I now come to Question 3, in reply to which I have to say that it will be one of the primary duties of an association to define the limits of recruiting areas within its county limits, so that normally units will be recruited from residents within the area of the Association by which these units are administered. Any recruiting within that area for units not administered by the Association will be a matter of arrangement between the various Associations concerned. I must add, however, that in the case of certain special corps, such as the Medical Corps and the Corps of Electrical Engineers, the special circumstances demand that the recruiting should be to some extent carried on independently of county boundaries. These are what may be called expert or technical corps, and the material to be drawn upon is consequently scattered. I am sure, therefore, that your Lordships will appreciate the necessity of a slight departure from the general scheme of county organisation. It is not practicable in such cases to limit the recruiting area by the boundaries of any particular county. It must be extended as the special circumstances demand, and thus, for instance, we find it necessary to allow the Corps of Electrical Engineers to reckon all the middle of England as their recruiting area.

Now, as regards Question 4, I am afraid that the Army Council cannot possibly grant the demand that the issue of separation allowance should be extended to the privates of the Territorial Force. I would remind your Lordships that it was not given to the Militia, except in some special cases when men were undergoing special courses of instruction, and such men were always non-commissioned officers. It has been decided to give it to the non-commissioned officers of the special Reserve, the transformed Militia, as well as to non-commissioned officers of the Territorial Force, but not to the privates, and I think your Lordships will agree that if any extension of the grant were to be made, the special Reserve would have a stronger claim, seeing that they are absent from their families for a much longer period than the Volunteers, six months initial and twenty-one days annual training, as compared with no such initial training and a maximum of fifteen days annual camp.

In the next place, I am sure your Lordships, so many of whom have had military experience of various kinds, will readily admit that it is important, from a military point of view, that the difference between the ranks of non-commissioned officer and private should be sufficiently accentuated. This has hardly been the case in the past. The Army Council are confident that giving the non-commissioned officer the pay of his rank and (in the case of married men) the separation allowance will, it is hoped, induce the Volunteer to strive, during the non-training period of the year, to improve his military efficiency. Finally, we must not overlook financial considerations, and the result of extending the privilege of separation allowance to all married members of the Territorial Force would be an increase of expenditure which the Army Council do not think should be lightly incurred. We have not sufficient *data* to work out the exact cost, but it is no exaggeration to say that it would not be less than £50,000, and might even amount to £100,000 per annum.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, I listened very carefully to the Answer given by the noble Earl with regard to the duties of secretaries of County Associations, and I am bound to say that I think noble Lords are very much in the position that they were before the Question was asked. The noble Earl's Answer forcibly reminds me of a question put by one who was anxious to know what the particular duties were of a high ecclesiastical dignatory. The questioner asked his friend, who was an authority on the subject, what were the duties of an archdeacon, and the only reply he could get was that his duties were to perform archidiaconal functions. As far as I can see, the only answer that has been given by the noble Earl is that the secretary is to perform secretarial functions. In the case of many Associations the difficulty is not as to what the duties of the secretary are, but how to get for the post of secretary, with its salary of only £150 a year, men competent to perform the duties. More than one Association have been advised that their only course to get anybody at all is to combine with another county and appoint one secretary for both counties; but, as it is an absolute *sine qua non* that there should be two offices, that proposal is hardly one to be adopted. I hope the Government will give attention to this point, because it is a serious difficulty, which in the initial stages of an experiment which we all hope will work out satisfactorily is likely to prove detrimental to the working of the County Associations. I am confident that if the Government cannot see their way to increase the funds which have been suggested for many of the counties it will be quite impossible to obtain competent men to perform the duties.

THE HOME ESTABLISHMENT.

EARL CAWDOR: My Lords, in the absence of my noble friend Viscount Midleton I beg to ask the noble Earl the Under-Secretary for War the Question on the Paper—namely, whether he will lay on the Table a Return giving the strength of each infantry battalion and each battery of artillery on the Home Establishment on 1st February, showing the number of men in each unit who have less than one year's service or are under twenty years of age; showing also the number of recruits at the depot in the following form—

Regiment of Battery.	Total Strength 1st February, 1908.	Total of Men who have less than One Year's Service or are under 20 Years of Age.	Recruits at Depot.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: We shall be very glad to give this Return, but I hope my noble friend will understand that we shall have to communicate with the local military authorities, and that it will not be possible to have it prepared before a fortnight or three weeks.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 13th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz. :—Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Margate Corporation Bill (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

The CHAIRMAN of WAYS and MEANS reported, That, after conferring with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Bills, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, should be first considered, they had determined that the following Bills should originate in the House of Lords, viz. :—Leith Burgh; North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, etc.).

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Binfield Heath; Bollington; Clerkenwell; East London; Egremont; Finchley; Heaton Moor; Newbridge; Richmond; Sidcup; South Bristol; South Shields; Sunderland; Whitstable; Winchcombe; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Birkenhead (two); Birtley; Caroline Lawson Lodge; Cottenham; Crediton; Devon; Godalming; Guildford; Haslemere; High Bentham; London; Newnham-on-Severn; Nottingham (two); Rochford (two); Shepherd's Bush; Sidcup; Southwick-on-Wear; South Wigston; Topsham; Wandsworth; and West Stanley; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

Estimate presented, of the sum required for the year ending 31st March, 1909, for the Effective and Non-Effective Services of the Army [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 49.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES) ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

Estimate presented, of the sum required for the year ending 31st March, 1909, to defray the Expense of the Ordnance Factories [by Command]; Referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 50.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Town Council of the Borough of Taunton, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Ex-Private Thackeray's Pension.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of Arthur Thackeray, late driver Royal Field Artillery, discharged through injury received on duty on 1s. per day pension; and whether, if this pension cannot be increased, it might be compounded for a sum of money which would enable this man to set up in some little business which might give him a chance to make a living.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This man was discharged after four years thirty-seven days service, on account of fracture of the left radius, due to an accident on duty. He is, as stated, in receipt of a pension of 1s. a day. The Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital have taken steps to have him medically examined with the view of ascertaining whether the effects of the injury are sufficiently severe to justify an increase of his pension. Under present regulations, as pensions of 1s. and under may not be commuted, he is not eligible to commute his pension.

Longford Telephone Service.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state when it is proposed to give a telephone service to Longford connected with Dublin and other towns; whether he is aware that this serice was promised by Lord Stanley four years ago; and what is the cause of the delay, seeing that it has been given to Cavan, Mullingar, and Sligo.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I can find no trace of a promise by my predecessor to extend the trunk telephone system to Longford. The system has not as yet been extended to Cavan, Mullingar, or Sligo; but terms have been quoted for a guaranteed extension to Mullingar, and if these are accepted I shall be happy to quote terms for a further extension to Longford.

Corn Exchange Post Office.

MR. BARKER (Penryn and Falmouth): To ask the Postmaster-General whether repeated complaints have been made by the staff at the Corn Exchange post office regarding the absence of heating apparatus; whether promises of reform have been made on a number of occasions; and whether he will give instructions that the alterations shall be made immediately.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have already had this matter under my personal consideration, but I am not aware that any promises have been made with regard to it. The office in question forms a small enclosure inside the Corn Exchange, and is occupied by one clerk only for four hours a day on three days of the week. I recently asked the Corn Exchange Company to arrange, if practicable, for the supply of a small oil-stove; and the company are giving the matter attention.

Coastguard Service.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrew's Burghs): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can make any formal statement in regard to His Majesty's Government's intentions as regards the Coastguard service, so that in the event of the present system being abolished the men now employed may be able to make arrangements for their return to civil life.

To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in the event of the present Coastguard service being abolished, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to establish a new service; if so, whether the men now employed in the Coastguard service will be allowed to join; and whether the time served in the Coastguard service will be allowed to count for pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) I cannot undertake to make any statement on the subject of the Coastguard until Vote A and Vote 1 are before the House.

French-Canadian Treaty.

MR. HILLS (Durham): To ask the President of the Board of Trade when the French-Canadian Treaty comes into operation; whether Switzerland and other countries having most-favoured-nation treaties with Canada receive the benefit of the tariff reductions granted to France; whether the reduced tariff applies only to goods either shipped direct from French to Canadian ports, or which if they touch at a British port do so without breaking bulk; and will French goods re-exported from British ports also obtain the benefit of the reductions.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The Convention in question will come into force as soon as ratifications are exchanged. Countries entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment will receive the benefit of the tariff reductions granted to France on conditions similar to those imposed upon that country. I am not in a position to give further information at present.

Grading of Irish School Teachers.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state why, on the introduction of the grading system, national teachers with no unfavourable record were not placed in grades corresponding to their classification at that time; whether in schools where teachers after years of hard study succeeded in obtaining first division of first class, and where proficiency is recorded as good on every occasion, even very good on some occasions, the principal teacher has been placed and kept in the lower grade while assistants in the same school have been awarded increments on every occasion where they became due; whether, in such cases, the former classification does in any way aid in obtaining the corresponding grade; and whether the Commissioners can consider these matters with a view to the removal of what is an injustice to this hard-working body of teachers.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education have furnished me with the following statement in reply to this Question. When the system of payments of teachers by consolidated salaries was introduced in 1900, each teacher was, as a rule, awarded an initial income equal at least to his average income from all State sources for the preceding three years. Cases in which this method of fixing initial income seemed to operate inequitably were specially considered by the Board. There were three grades of income recognised, namely, first, second, and third; and in the first grade there were two divisions. The teachers took rank in the grades in accordance with their initial incomes fixed in the method already indicated. In a large proportion of cases the grades of the teachers were found to correspond to their classification under the old rules, but this was not so in all cases, for many teachers of the first class (old regulations) had very small incomes, seeing that they were in charge of small schools, while a large number of teachers of the third and second classes had very large incomes. It is obvious, therefore, that to have placed all teachers in 1900 in grades corresponding to their classes would have been productive of grave injustice in numerous instances. Moreover, there was no real connection between classification and gradation, class salaries and grade salaries being entirely different. Promotion of teachers depends on a variety of circumstances, such as training, position in school, ability and general attainments, good service, seniority, average attendance at the school, etc., and if teachers of the first division of first class (old regulations) have not obtained promotion, some essential condition has not been complied with. But the Commissioners are always prepared to investigate any case of alleged hardship that may be brought under their notice, either in connection with refusal of promotion or refusal of increment. The promotion of principals and the award of increments to assistants are independent operations and may have no relation one to the other. No general Answer can be given to this part of the Question. High classification under the old rules is an element for consideration in connection with promotion. The Commissioners will consider any case of alleged grievance which may be submitted to them.

St. George's Channel, Bermuda.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State will confer with the Admiralty concerning the desirability of widening the channel of the waterway of St. George's Channel, Bermuda, so as to admit of the passage of vessels of deeper draught than those now able to use it with safety.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The question of improving the waterway of St. George's Channel in the manner suggested has already engaged the attention of the Secretary of State, but there are grave financial difficulties in the way of the scheme; and, even if these difficulties were removed, it is very uncertain whether alterations in the channel could be made sufficient to permit the entry of large Transatlantic vessels. The Secretary of State does not feel able at present to take up the matter again.

Criminal Law Amendment Act Convictions.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can say how many persons in the United Kingdom were, in 1906 and 1907, convicted under Section 5, Subsection 1, of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, in whose cases the girls were thirteen and fourteen years of age, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The number of convictions in 1906, under the subsection mentioned by the hon. Member, was seventy-four. I cannot say how many of them related to girls of thirteen and fourteen years of age, because the calendars in describing the offence usually follow the words of the Act and speak of the girls as being over thirteen and under sixteen years of age. The figures for 1907 are not yet available.

Factory Inspection.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many factory inspectors and assistant factory inspectors were appointed in 1907; and whether those appointed passed any examination prior to their appointment.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Five men inspectors were appointed last year. One was taken from the list of successful candidates in the Home and Indian Civil Service examination; one was appointed after a competitive examination (limited to three inspector's assistants) in factory law and sanitary science; the remaining three were appointed after the ordinary competitive examination for factory inspectors. One lady inspector was appointed after the usual examination, and one of her competitors was also appointed temporarily, to supply the place of an inspector absent on leave. No inspector's assistants were appointed during the year.

Ecclesiastical Commissioners' Estates—Public Houses Suppressed.

MR. WEDGWOOD: To ask the hon. Member for the Crewe Division, as Church Estates Commissioner, if he will say how many public houses have been suppressed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners upon their estates during the twelve months ending 31st October, 1907, and in how many cases the leases of public houses have been renewed by them during the same period; and if he will also state what have been the aggregate amounts received by the Commissioners in respect of public houses on their estates during each of the twenty official years last past.

(*Answered by Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*) During the twelve months preceding 31st October, 1907, the Commissioners refused to renew the lease of one public house (expiring 1911), and, on the application of the lessee, allowed the discontinuance as licensed premises of another house, while a third was closed owing to the financial failure of the lessee. The leases of two public houses expired by effluxion of time and were not renewed. The lease of one existing public house was renewed, but this was agreed to as long ago as 1896, the applicants allowing the licence of a neighbouring public house to lapse in that year. Apart from the question of the labour which would be involved, the Commissioners are not prepared to give the information asked for in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's Question.

Greenwich Age Pensioners.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will say how many men are now eligible to become Greenwich age pensioners, and how many actually receive these pensions, what is the annual amount set apart from Greenwich Hospital funds for the purpose of paying these age pensions; how much additional money would be required annually if all eligible men were actually provided for; and what is the average age of the men now receiving these age pensions who have not belonged to the Seamen Pensioner Reserve.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Four thousand and eighty men are eligible for, but not in receipt of, the age pension. There are 8,820 actual recipients. The amount set apart from Greenwich Hospital funds for the payment of these pensions is £100,900. An additional sum of £31,000 would be required to provide for the men actually eligible at the present date. The average age of the recipients of these pensions, excluding those who have served in the Seamen Pensioner Reserve, is sixty-four.

Portsmouth Dockyard Fire.

Mr. W. T. WILSON: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the workmen who lost their tools in the fire that happened at the Royal Dockyard, Portsmouth, on 12th November last, have had them replaced; and, if not, is it the intention of the Admiralty to make good the loss sustained by the workmen.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The payment of compensation on account of the losses in question has been authorised, and the amounts awarded will be paid to the claimants in due course.

Diphtheria in Wood Pigeons.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been called to the prevalence of a disease called diphtheria in wood pigeons in several counties in England; whether he will take steps to form a Commission to investigate the matter and to ascertain whether it is a disease contagious to game, poultry, or other birds; and whether it is of a nature to be dangerous to man.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board are aware of the prevalence of the disease to which the hon. and gallant Member refers. They understand that scientific investigations are being made with respect to it, the results of which will be carefully watched. They do not think that the matter is one which could with advantage be made the subject of inquiry by a Commission. I shall be glad to bring the concluding inquiry to the notice of the Local Government Board, by whom questions concerning the public health fall to be considered.

Imports of Foreign Fodder.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the Board of Agriculture, whether, having regard to the letter addressed on 15th November, 1907, to the Board of Agriculture from the Central Chamber of Agriculture, in which it was stated that the importation of hay and straw from Holland and Belgium was likely to convey foot-and-mouth disease to this country, and having further regard to the fact that this disease has broken out in close proximity to Leith, one of the ports through which the importation of Continental hay and straw takes place, His Majesty's Government will prohibit the future importation of hay and straw from all countries in which foot-and-mouth disease exists.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The matter to which the hon. Member refers is receiving very careful consideration, but our information on the subject is not complete, and no decision can as yet be arrived at respecting it.

County Wicklow Rural Deliveries.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will order a daily delivery of letters in the townlands of Askakeagh, Carnog, and other townlands in the rural district of Shillelagh, county Wicklow, instead of the present tri-weekly delivery, which causes considerable inconvenience to the inhabitants.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I regret to find that, as the cost of the existing postal service three times a week to the townlands in question is as much as the correspondence justifies, I am unable to comply with the hon. Member's wishes.

Motor Car Trade Statistics.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Board of Trade Returns of the Import and Export of Motor Cars are misleading owing to the fact that complete *chassis* are not classified separately, but are included among parts; and whether he will give instructions that complete *chassis* shall be classified separately in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The imports and exports of motor *chassis* have been separately distinguished since the beginning of the current year, and particulars for January have already been published in the issue for that month of the "Monthly Accounts relating to Trade and Navigation."

British Hop Industry.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that a syndicate of hop growers has been formed on the Pacific coast of America with the object of destroying the British hop industry, and that this fact is seriously accelerating the grubbing of hops in this country, and is thereby causing the loss of employment to many thousands of persons; and whether, pending the Report of the Select Committee on the Hop Industry, he will take steps temporarily to safeguard British hop growers against the action of this syndicate.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The Board of Trade have received a Report from His Majesty's consul at Portland, Oregon, to the effect that an attempt is being made to form an association whose operations would include the exportation of hops from the Pacific Coast to the United Kingdom, but I have not yet heard that such an association has been actually formed. I understand that, generally speaking, such hops are not so suitable for making beer as the British, as the flavouring quality is inferior, and a larger quantity is required of these American hops to bring the flavouring power up to that of the British.

Licensing Statistics.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the number, respectively, of alehouse, on-beerhouse, and on-beer-and-wine licences, whole-year, issued for each of the years ending 31st March, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908, stating separately for each year how many of each kind were new licences.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have received the figures, which are given below, for the number of ale house, on-beerhouse, and on-beer-and-wine licences for the year, ended 31st March, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907. The figures include part-year licences, but the number of these is small. I regret that I have been unable to obtain any figures showing the number of new licences issued.

	Year ended 31st March.				
	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
England :					
Alehouses (publicans) - -	67,055	66,755	66,239	65,990	65,863
On-beerhouse (retailers of beer and cider on) - - -	29,184	28,880	28,522	28,096	27,514
On-beer-and-wine (retailers of beer and wine on) - - -	4,919	4,891	4,845	4,756	4,714
	101,158	100,526	99,606	98,842	98,091
Scotland :					
Alehouses (publicans) - -	7,127	7,084	7,025	6,991	6,951
On-beerhouse (retailers of beer and cider on) - - -	160	174	165	168	185
On-beer-and-wine (retailers of beer and wine on) - -	37	37	35	34	32
	7,324	7,295	7,225	7,193	7,168
Ireland :					
Alehouses (publicans) - -	17,749	17,663	17,571	17,506	17,496
On-beerhouse (retailers of beer and cider on) - - -	181	226	210	223	224
On-beer-and-wine (retailers of beer and wine on) - -	16	14	14	14	14
	17,946	17,903	17,795	17,743	17,734
United Kingdom :					
Alehouses (publicans) - -	91,931	91,502	90,835	90,487	90,310
On-beerhouse (retailers of beer and cider on) - - -	29,525	29,280	28,897	28,487	27,923
On-beer-and-wine (retailers of beer and wine on) - -	4,972	4,942	4,894	4,804	4,760
	126,428	125,724	124,626	123,778	122,993

Judicial Administration in India—Mozufferpore Murder Appeal.

SIR HENRY COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that on 8th January an appeal was heard before the High Court of Calcutta from the order of the district judge of Mozufferpore who, differing from the opinion of both of the assessors in a murder case, had passed a sentence of death; that the counsel who appeared for the condemned man was stopped by the Court before he had finished his argument; that the Crown Prosecutor then said that he could not support the conviction as the sessions judge had implicitly believed the defence story, and that therefore the prosecution was bound to fail; that judgment was then reserved; that on 14th January the court dismissed the appeal and confirmed the sentence of death; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I have seen a report to the effect stated in the newspapers. I will make inquiry as to its accuracy. I must remind my hon. friend that the Secretary of State has no power to revise the judgments of the High Court.

Ballinamona Evicted Tenant.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether the Estates Commissioners have yet succeeded in bringing about the restoration of Thomas Kent to the holding at Ballinamona, on the Kingston estate, Cork County, seeing that the farm in question is in the landlord's possession and the purchase of the estate nearly completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have not so far effected the restoration of Thomas Kent. The matter is at present in the hands of an inspector.

Kells Labourers Cottages.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, at the recent inquiry into the scheme promoted by the Kells Rural District Council for the erection of labourers cottages, the application of William Dooley, Fordstown, for a cottage and plot was rejected; and, if so, for what reason.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This application was rejected by the inspector on the ground that the applicant did not appear to be an agricultural labourer within the meaning of the Labourers Acts.

M'Donnell Estate, Galway.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the M'Donnell estate at Cappadarock, Lavally, county Galway, sold over three years ago to the Estates Commissioners, will be divided up amongst the tenants; and whether it is proposed to give any of the grass lands to Mrs. Burke, who already holds 70 acres on the estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have not yet purchased the property in question. They have had it inspected with a view to purchase, and the inspector's report is at present under their consideration. The manner in which the lands, if acquired, will be resold has not yet been considered

Arrest of Councillor Kennedy.

MR. HAZLETON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the local head constable, accompanied by other policemen, disturbed the household of Mr. C. J. Kennedy, County Councillor, Dunmore, county Galway, on a certain night last November, about 12 o'clock, for the purpose of inquiring after the whereabouts of Mr. Kennedy; and, if so, what was the purpose of their action.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Mr. Kennedy is a licensed publican. On 1st November, 1907, at 11 p.m., a police patrol, consisting of the head constable and a constable, visited and inspected the public house in pursuance of their powers under the Licensing Acts. The visit was not paid with the object of ascertaining Mr. Kennedy's whereabouts.

Chaffpool Evicted Tenant.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners received an application for reinstatement from Bartholomew Kearns, son of a tenant evicted on the estate of Captain Edward Armstrong, Chaffpool, county Sligo; and, if so, when was the application received, has it been considered, and what decision has been arrived at; and, in view of the fact that Kearns must emigrate in case he is not reinstated at an early date, will he ask the Estates Commissioners to make an order in his case as soon as possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners received the application in question on 7th July last, but have not yet been able to have inquiries made in the matter.

Irish Congested Districts Board.

Mr. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the amount spent in the various unions in the acquisition and improvement of land by the Congested Districts Board.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The expenditure of the Congested Districts Board is not recorded by unions. I may, however, refer the hon. Member to the last Annual Report of the Board (Cd. 3767, of 1907). In Appendices 31 and 32 he will find detailed abstracts of the Board's expenditure on estate improvement works and the purchase of estates.

Attanagh Evicted Tenant.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received a claim for reinstatement from Mr. James Revington, Grennan, Attanagh, Queen's county, estate of Lord Orkney, who claims as representative of his mother, who was evicted in June, 1882; whether he is aware that Mr. Revington's claim is supported by the Very Rev. Canon Barry, D.D., P.P., and the other clergymen of the parish; and can he say what course the Commissioners propose to adopt in this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application received from James Revington, who seeks reinstatement as the representative of an evicted tenant, and have decided, after full consideration of the circumstances, that they can take no action in the matter.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Artisan Ratings in the Dockyards.

Mr. MALLET (Plymouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the present system of using the artisan ratings under the direction of the warrant officer carpenters to make good defects in the hulls and fittings of His Majesty's ships has proved satisfactory, and maintained the efficiency of the ships; whether this system has enabled the Vote for Maintenance to be in any way reduced; and whether the Admiralty will consider the advisability of improving the position and the conditions of service of the warrant officer carpenters, by whose efforts these results have been obtained.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): Satisfactory work in making good minor defects and in maintaining general efficiency continues to be performed by the artisan ratings as hitherto, and the Vote for repairs is consequently less than it would otherwise be. In supervising these repairs, the carpenter warrant officers are only carrying out the duties for which they were appointed, and it is not considered that they are entitled to special treatment on this account.

Mr. JENKINS (Chatham): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the warrant officers referred to in the Question have received no advance for twenty-five years?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: I am not aware of that.

Wages Petition from the Western District.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether a petition from the operative masons and bricklayers employed in the western district, under the Director of Works, with regard to rates of pay and the abolition of the bonus system, has been received; and whether any and, if so, what reply has been given to the petition.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: A petition has been received at the Admiralty from a committee, and inquiry is being made into this committee's position.

MR. JENKINS: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiry to be made as to why the Works Department have not conceded the advance to the labourers?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON asked for notice of the Question.

Army Horses.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the reason which led the Army Council to omit the ages of cavalry and horse and field artillery horses from the General Annual Report on the British Army, published in March last; and whether, inasmuch as the number of horses of military age continues to be known to the Army Council, the policy can be reconsidered in publishing tables in the coming spring, and the number of horses fit for service given.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): These tables were omitted from the General Annual Report after careful consideration, because they were not held to be of sufficient public or official interest to justify their retention. Owing to the recent reductions in the unit Returns, it would have been necessary to institute a special Return in order to obtain this information from India, as the Return in which it was formerly included has been abolished. At a time when every effort is being made to reduce the labour involved in the preparation of Returns, I deprecate any reintroduction of such work. My right hon. friend will also doubtless recollect that a Committee of this House only recently urged strongly the necessity of reducing the size of Parliamentary publications, and the Return affords a case in point.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: The British part is quite separate from the Indian part, and the reduction of the contents by the change was a single page, and the Report itself was increased by three pages.

MR. HALDANE: If the right hon. Gentleman wishes any particular information, and will ask me privately, I shall be glad to gratify him.

Woolwich Arsenal.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the reductions in His Majesty's arsenal at Woolwich have reached the normal point aimed at, or whether further reductions are now in contemplation.

MR. HALDANE: The numbers in the arsenal have not yet reached the normal minimum proposed, but the gradual reduction to that minimum will be effected by wastage, and not by further discharges.

MR. J. WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Will the right hon. Gentleman consult the Admiralty in view of the fact that some 2,000 men at Devonport Dockyard are working overtime? Cannot he find work for the Woolwich men there?

MR. HALDANE: If the hon. Member will put down a Question I will look into it.

Indian Marriage Laws.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that under the joint operation of the Indian Christian Converts Dissolution of Marriage Act and the Indian Penal Code, converts to Christianity suffer hardship, and particularly Roman Catholic Christians, who are at present by the Civil law deprived of the benefit of the Pauline dispensation to which they are entitled by the Canon Law of their Church; whether he is aware that by this privilege of the Roman Catholic Church, and by immemorial usage in that behalf, the dissolution was permitted of a marriage subsisting between a convert and a spouse, who refused to live with him or her, because of his or her conversion, by a simple process outside the courts, lasting thirty days and costing nothing, whereas under the existing law the procedure is so dilatory and expensive as to make recourse to it impossible to the average Christian convert; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made into a position which results in such hardships to those concerned, in view of the substitution of some short and simple procedure in place of that now provided by law.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): The opportunity has been given to the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church in India of suggesting simplifications of the procedure laid down in the Act mentioned. I shall always be ready to consider such suggestions, but I am not prepared in any way to exempt the class of case referred to from the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts. I have no reason to suppose that the provisions of the Act are regarded as a hardship by the Indian Christian community generally, and I do not think it necessary to order a special inquiry.

*MR. REES Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it was represented that it was a grievance, and when I asked leave to introduce a Bill to remedy it, the answer of the Council was not that there was not a grievance, but that that was not the time to remedy it?

MR. J. WARD: Would it not be much better for the right hon. Gentleman to assume there was a grievance?

The Agitation at Mymensingh.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to a notification of the magistrate of Mymensingh, dated 3rd January, which directs the local village authorities to report to the police any case of interference with the sale or use of any class of goods, any political demonstration, and the resort to any place within or passage through any village of any person for the purpose of political agitation, or of interference with the sale or use of any goods; whether this notification has been issued with the authority of Government; and whether he will indicate his disapproval of official action of this nature, which is directed against the popular movement in favour of using country products in preference to foreign imports.

MR. MORLEY: I have seen a newspaper report of the nature indicated in the Question, but I have no knowledge of the matter from any other source. I will make inquiry on the subject. Meanwhile, it seems reasonable that the district officer should be acquainted with all the events (including those described in the Question) that take place in his district, and especially in view of the disturbances that have occurred in Mymensingh district.

The Afridi Punitive Expedition.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state the object of the proposed military expedition into Afridiland; how many men are to be employed; and what the estimated cost is likely to be.

MR. MORLEY: The object of the punitive measures against the Zakka Khel is to put an end to the series of raids which armed bands of the tribe have been executing for some months in territory beyond tribal limits under the civil administration of the Government of India. I gave a full statement of these raids on Monday in reply to a Question from the hon. Member for Mid-Armagh. The force to be employed consists of two brigades, roughly speaking 6,000 men, with a third brigade in reserve. The cost must depend on the length of the operations. I have received estimates, but they are necessarily rough estimates, because, owing to the secrecy involved, estimates have not yet been received from Comptrollers of Accounts.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: With reference to the notice which I gave to call attention to this subject, I wish to say that action will not be taken by me in consequence of two blocking notices having been put down, one by a warlike Liberal and the other by a pugnacious Tory.

*MR. REES: As a personal explanation the all-sufficient excuse for my action is found in the hon. Member's action two days ago when he thought fit soundly to abuse——

*MR. SPEAKER: This is an irregular conversation.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): Will the right hon. Gentleman put the cost of this expedition on the British public instead of on the people of India?

MR. MORLEY: If the House of Commons desires it, I will consider that matter.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): What is the proportion of Imperial troops to the native regiments in this expedition? Is it not a fact that while the expedition amounts roughly to 6,000 men on our side, the force of the tribesmen amounts all told to 4,000 men only?

MR. MORLEY: I do not know how that is; but I hope that my hon. friend does not mean to say that we are only to employ exactly the same number of men as the tribesmen.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman now say whether news correspondents will accompany the expedition?

MR. MORLEY: I am in correspondence with the Government of India on the subject, and I have not yet decided as to my own views.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: If we are rightly informed, this expedition has started. Surely the right hon. Gentleman could have found out from Lord Kitchener whether or not war correspondents were to be allowed to accompany the force.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must put his interruption in the form of an interrogation.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I hope then that the right hon. Gentleman will take my interruption as an interrogation and answer it.

MR. MORLEY: I cannot myself quite put it in the form of an interrogation.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Then I will try. Has this expedition started or has it not? Can the right hon. Gentleman not obtain precise information showing whether or not war correspondents have accompanied the expedition? If they do not accompany it we know its object.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I wish to ask whether is is not the fact that the late Lord Lawrence said that expeditions of this kind were unnecessary?

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): Is this expedition supplied with explosive bullets?

MR. MORLEY: I hope not.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): The House of Commons ought to know.

*MR. REES: As a matter of personal explanation, may I say that the action of the hon. Member for Clare explains my own? Only two days ago he accused the Indian Government of wantonly making war on innocent tribesmen at the expense of its own starving subjects. Such an accusation could only proceed from abysmal ignorance or mischievous——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. Under the guise of a personal explanation, the hon. Member is not entitled to make an attack on another Member.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: After what the hon. Gentleman has said, I think you will consider, Sir, that I am entitled to a word. I made no attack whatever on the Indian Government. I never mentioned it at all; and the statement of the hon. Gentleman is, therefore, quite unfounded. I still maintain that he is a warlike Liberal.

*Mr. REES: I have no objection to the hon. Member's representation, or misrepresentation, of myself. I believed that I quoted the hon. Member's words; but if in anything I have said there was a personal attack on the hon. Member I regret it. My anxiety was to defend the Government of India.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: After what the hon. Gentleman has said, perhaps it is only right for me to say that, if I have said anything——I very readily withdraw the epithet "warlike"; and, for the rest, I hope the hon. Gentleman is a Liberal.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether a military expedition against the Afridis is in preparation by the Government of India; whether he will state to the House the reasons for this expedition; and whether, since the expenditure on this expedition may prevent the reduction of expenditure on the North-West frontier of India, he will appoint a Commission to inquire into the necessity.

Mr. MORLEY: I would refer the hon. Member to my Answer on Monday last to the hon. Member for Mid Armagh for the reasons of the punitive measures being taken against the Zakka Khel. There seems no reason on financial or any other grounds for appointing a Commission to inquire into the necessity for the punitive measures. It would be an abdication of the plain duty of His Majesty's Government.

Anglo-Russian Convention and Indian Military Expenditure.

Mr. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, what reduction in the military expenditure on the North-West frontier of India will be made as a result of the signature of the Anglo-Russian Convention; and when he expects such reduction to take place.

Mr. MORLEY: I am not at present in a position to make a statement on the subject. The question is under our consideration.

Swaziland—Native Reserves.

Sir HENRY COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to the fact that under the Proclamation No. 28 of 1907 the whole of the Government concessions, which comprise about one-third of the Swazi territory, will be available for native occupation, in addition to the area of one-third of the land granted to the concessionaires for the exclusive use and occupation of natives, His Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to secure to the natives the inalienable possession of the land which is available for native occupation.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.): Under the Proclamation the Special Commissioner has power to set apart areas of land for the sole and exclusive use and occupation of the natives. He has instructions to select ample land of good quality for the accommodation of the Swazis and for the reasonable expansion of the tribe. It does not, there fore, appear that any further measures are at present required.

Swazi Administration.

Sir HENRY COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether His Majesty's Government will take into consideration the advisablity of estabilishing the Swazi chief and council as an advisory council for native administration and legislation in Swaziland on similar lines to the advisory committee which has been organised in Basutoland.

Mr. CHURCHILL: This question was raised by the Swazi chiefs when they were recently in England, and the Secretary of State is in communication with the High Commissioner on the subject.

New Hebrides.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the Report of the French and English Commissioners to the New Hebrides, containing instructions for regulations, lately received by the Colonial Office, will be laid upon the Table at an early date.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Report is not, in my opinion, of sufficient interest to justify the expense of an official publication; but I will arrange to have a typewritten copy placed in the Library for the use of Members who may care to study it.

Tristan d'Acunha.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, what is the date of the latest Report received from Tristan d'Acunha; whether the trade foreshadowed in the correspondence published in September, 1907, has sprung up; and whether he can furnish any information as to the welfare of the inhabitants.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no further information upon this solitary island than is contained in the last Blue-book on the subject.

Dinizulu—Alleged Ill-treatment of Natives.

SIR HENRY COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he has any official information showing that, since the voluntary surrender of Dinizulu to the civil authorities on 9th December last, the Government of Natal has closed Zululand to the outside world; that the lash has been freely used there; that unresisting natives have been shot dead; that hundreds of natives who were suspected of being likely witnesses for Dinizulu have been arrested and thrown into prison, and all information regarding their whereabouts kept absolutely secret; and whether His Majesty's Government will cause inquiry to be made into the matter.

MR. CHURCHILL: I can say no more about these matters than that we are asking for information on many points, and we hope that the Governor of Natal will be able to supply us with it on his return from Zululand. In the meanwhile I would advise the House to suspend their opinion. Very full accounts of all native affairs in Natal will be found in the Blue-book recently published, and they will be supplemented as soon as possible by a further publication.

*MR. REES: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in regard to such charges as these brought against the governors of British Colonies and Possessions, it would not be simpler to assume that they are true?

MR. CHURCHILL: I have not found anything to complain of in any of the questions.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): When does the right hon. Gentleman expect to be in possession of the information mentioned in the earlier part of his Answer?

MR. CHURCHILL said he did not quite know when the new information alluded to would be ready. The Government had already published a very full and comprehensive Blue-book on affairs in Natal. The information accumulated from time to time, and as soon as they got another batch of information it would be laid before the House of Commons.

Chinese Labour in the Rand.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Kingswinford, Staffordshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies, whether he will state the number of Chinese labourers employed in and on the Witwatersrand mines, on 1st January, 1906, and 1st January, 1908, on skilled labour and on unskilled labour; the number of white men employed, on the same dates, on skilled labour and on unskilled labour; and the number of natives employed, on the same dates, on skilled labour and on unskilled labour, respectively.

MR. CHURCHILL: The official Returns show the numbers employed on the last, and not on the first day of the month. The total numbers employed on the Rand gold-mines on 31st December, 1905, were: Whites, 17,248; natives, 84,254; Chinese, 47,267. On 30th November, 1907, the latest date for which official statistics are available, the numbers were: Whites, 16,918; natives, 116,832; Chinese, 40,055. It will be seen that an increase of 32,578 natives is to be set against a decrease of 7,212 Chinese. It is true that there has been a small reduction of 330 in the number of whites employed; but to appreciate the true significance of these figures it must be remembered that in consequence of the strike, the number of whites fell to 15,118 on 31st May, 1907, since when there has been a continuous increase, amounting to 1,800 in six months. All the Chinese employed are said to be engaged upon unskilled labour. In the cases of white men and natives the numbers employed on skilled and unskilled labour respectively are not distinguished.

In reply to a further Question the right hon. Gentleman said the 31st May figures represented the low-water mark of white employment, but since then the increase had been steady.

British Asiatic Subjects.

SIR J. RANDLES (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, if he can make arrangements for the consideration, by the subsidiary conference contemplated by the resolution carried on 9th May at the Imperial Conference, of the desirability of uniformity, as far as practicable, in the treatment of natural-born subjects of Asiatic descent, as well as the conditions of naturalisation in one part of His Majesty's dominions being made effective in other parts.

MR. CHURCHILL: The resolution of 9th May to which the hon. Member refers dealt solely with the question of naturalisation, and could not be held to include within its scope the distinct subject of the treatment of natural-born subjects of Asiatic descent.

SIR J. RANDLES: Would it not come at any rate within the scope of the right hon. Gentleman's consideration whether this particular question should not be dealt with either by that subsidiary conference or by another? The reason I mentioned the subsidiary conference is that there should be no question of naturalised Asiatic subjects being placed in a better position than natural-born Asiatic British subjects.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is a serious point and it ought to be considered. The machinery of the new Secretariat no doubt lends itself to the consideration of such questions, but whether we can charge it with the specific duty of inquiring into this point I have no authority to pronounce. I will, however, see that the hon. Gentleman's suggestion is not overlooked.

Indentured Labourers in Madagascar.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, when Papers will be laid dealing with the recruiting of indentured labourers from the island of Madagascar.

MR. CHURCHILL: I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to a Question by the hon. Member for North-West Lanark on 3rd February. No reply has as yet been received to the inquiry referred to in that Answer and I am not, therefore, in a position to lay Papers.

East African Civil Service.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is held as necessary by the Colonial Office that candidates for positions in the Civil Service in East Africa must have a university education; and whether retrenched civil servants from the Transvaal applying for a position in East Africa or Nigeria, have received no encouragement because they did not possess a university training.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is not essential that candidates for the East African Civil Service should have had a university education, but a university degree is one of the qualifications which is taken into account in determining the respective merits of candidates. It is not the case that retrenched civil servants from the Transvaal have been discouraged on the ground suggested.

Martial Law in Natal.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, prior to the proclamation of martial law in Natal, or up to the present time, there has been any armed resistance to the law; whether the Petition of Right is part of the law of Natal; whether any sanction has been given by the Legislature of Natal, either before or since the proclamation of martial law, for the suspension of constitutional rights by the Executive; and for how long His Majesty's Government intends to be a party to the suspension of the constitution by the Executive Government without legislative sanction by continuing His Majesty's commission to the Governor.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, sir, no armed resistance has, I understand, taken place, though it was apprehended. I understand that under the Roman Dutch Common Law, which is the common law of Natal, there is no Petition of Right, but in 1894 the Legislature passed an Act to provide for enforcement of claims against the Crown which substantially secures to the subject the same privileges. The Legislature of Natal has not been in session since martial law was proclaimed in Zululand. With regard to the attitude of His Majesty's Government I cannot at present add anything to the statements already made.

MR. HERBERT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether His Majesty's Government will press the Government of Natal to summon the Legislature without delay?

MR. CHURCHILL: A matter which affects the assembly of the Natal Parliament must be a matter for the Natal Government to decide. The Government will no doubt be held to account by their supporters and opponents in their own Parliament.

MR. HERBERT: Is not His Majesty's Government satisfied that the Constitution has been suspended, and is His Majesty's Government not responsible for that by maintaining the Governor who gave his consent to that proceeding?

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not think we can attempt to advise the Natal Government as to the method upon which they should deal with their own Parliament, to which they are responsible and by which they are controlled. I am not aware that the Constitution has been suspended.

MR. HERBERT: Does the right hon. Gentleman lay it down that for the Executive Government in time of peace to announce that they will not proceed according to the law of the land is not a suspension of the Constitution?

MR. CHURCHILL: I must explain that an Act of indemnity will have to be passed to cover the action taken under martial law. That Act has first to be passed in the Natal Parliament, and that is the moment when the people of Natal will be able to express any opinion they have formed on the conduct of the Executive. That Act will also have to receive the sanction of the Crown.

MR. LUPTON: Before it is sanctioned by the Crown will the matter be brought before Parliament?

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): What does the right hon. Gentleman mean by "the people of Natal"?

MR. CHURCHILL: I mean, of course, a more limited representation than would be conveyed by the words "people of Great Britain." I mean the people of Natal who elect the Parliament.

The Pekin—Kalgan Railway.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give the House any information regarding the progress of the railway from Pekin to Kalgan.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): As stated in my reply to the hon. Member on 3rd June last, trains are running as far as Nank'on, a distance of over thirty-four miles, out of a total of 125 miles to Kalgan.

Last September the following additional particulars were furnished by the engineer-in-chief. Beyond Nank'on, three miles of rails had been laid and two tunnels completed, besides which a third tunnel (1,200 feet long) and two-thirds of the remaining one (3,450 feet) had been driven through. On the north side of the Nankow Pass work had been begun and about two-thirds of the earthwork to Huailai (about half-way between Pekin and Kalgan) had been finished. The line was to be opened to traffic as far as Huailai as soon as the rails reached that place. It was estimated that the whole line would be opened in a semi-finished state in 1909, and would be completed in 1910.

Shanghai Opium Dens.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the retention of 1,600 opium dens within the British settlement of Shanghai is entirely dependent on the annual meeting of ratepayers of the settlement, which will be held in March next; whether the ultimate control over the municipal council and responsibility for the settlement rests with His Majesty's Government, under whose authority alone the settlement has any existence in China; and, if so, whether, having regard to the decision of His Majesty's Government to support and encourage the anti-opium policy of the Chinese Government, even though it may cost us some sacrifice, His Majesty's Government will now take steps, before the meeting of ratepayers in March, to ensure that the municipal council at Shanghai shall follow the example of the Chinese authorities in the native city of Shanghai and close all opium dens in the British settlement without delay.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The retention of the opium dens in the settlement is, in the first resort, a matter for the decision of the municipal council, who are elected by the ratepayers. The ultimate responsibility for the good order of the settlement, which now has an international *status*, rests not only with His Majesty's Government, but with the other Treaty Powers in China. The council have already been informed of the desire of His Majesty's Government that the *bona fide* efforts of the Chinese authorities to diminish the consumption of opium should be encouraged and supported as far as possible, and the council have decided to refuse applications for new licences. The council having intimated that they cannot go beyond the refusal of applications for new licences without the authority of the ratepayers, His Majesty's Government consider it advisable to await the result of the meeting to be held next month before taking further action in the matter.

Turkey and Persia—Frontier Delimitation.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information as to the occurrences in connection with the occupation by Turkish troops of the Persian town of Suj Bulak; whether the Turkish troops have been removed from the town and district; and what progress is being made by the Governments of Great Britain and Russia in their efforts to secure a speedy delimitation of the frontier between Turkey and Persia.

SIR EDWARD GREY: According to telegraphic reports received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabriz, who is at present at Urumia, the Persian Governor-General evacuated Suj Bulak on or about 25th January, and the Turkish troops entered the town the next day; but the accounts of the incidents which preceded and gave rise to these occurrences are conflicting. The Turkish troops are stated by the Porte to have evacuated Suj Bulak and to have retired on Lahidjan, but Turkish troops are still in occupation of Persian territory. A Turco-Persian Frontier Commission is at Urumia. Little progress has yet been made, and the question continues to engage the attention of His Majesty's Government.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Have there been any disturbances recently at Tabriz?

SIR EDWARD GREY asked for notice of the Question.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when he proposes to issue the map showing the respective spheres of Great Britain and Russia in Persia; and whether the line mentioned in Article 1 of the Anglo-Russian Convention as running through and including certain towns extends only to the town boundary in each case, or whether it has a larger extension.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Two maps were placed in the tea-room early last week. The line includes in the Russian sphere the towns through which it is stated to run, but has no larger extension.

Germany and the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will communicate to the House any correspondence which may have taken place between His Majesty's Government and that of Germany in connection with the Anglo-Russian Convention.

SIR EDWARD GREY: There is no such correspondence.

Opium Traffic with China.

MR. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when the Papers promised respecting the opium traffic from India to China will be in the hands of Members.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It is hoped that the Papers promised respecting the opium traffic from India to China will be presented to Parliament in the course of a week or ten days.

British Trade with Turkey—English High School at Constantinople.

MR. HERBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to the value of British trade in Turkey and to the fact that various nations grant subsidies to commercial schools in Constantinople for the purpose of training boys of their own nationality to represent the interests of their trade, he is prepared to recommend the granting of a small subsidy to the English high school for boys in Constantinople.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The question of making such a grant is now under consideration.

Naval Programmes.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Naval Programme of this country has been communicated to any foreign countries in accordance with the intimation made at the Hague Conference.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I presume the intimation to which the hon. Member alludes is a declaration made by the Senior British Plenipotentiary at the Fourth Plenary Meeting of the Hague Conference on 17th August. That declaration stated that His Majesty's Government would be prepared to communicate annually to Powers who would adopt the same course, what new ships of war they contemplated building, and the cost thereby entailed. It was based upon the assumption that in fact, if not in theory, the naval programmes of Great Powers are to some extent dependent upon each other. Until other Powers are ready to exchange information on this basis, there is no object in one Power communicating programmes in advance to another. But the offer of His Majesty's Government will hold good at any time.

Tibet.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether Article 4 of the provisions concerning Tibet of the Convention of 1907 between Great Britain and Russia cancels Article 3 of the Convention of 1906 between the United Kingdom and China respecting Tibet, by which Article it was arranged with the Chinese Government that Great Britain should be entitled to lay down telegraph lines connecting Gyantse, Gartok, and Yatung with India.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Article 3 of the Convention with China of 1906, while modifying Article 9 of the Convention with Tibet, concedes to the British Government the right of telegraphic communication between India and the trade marts. Telegraphic communication with the marts, thus comes within the terms of the Convention with Tibet, the fulfilment of which, under Article 1 of the Convention of 1906, Great Britain and China have engaged to secure. Article 2 of the arrangement with Russia regarding Tibet recognises the engagements entered into by Great Britain and China in Article 1 of the Convention of 1906.

MR. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will state the names and *status* of the British agents appointed to watch over British trade at the trade marts of Gyantse, Gartok, and Yatung, in Tibet; whether it is proposed to make any change in their *status*; whether, under Article 9 of the Convention of 1904 between Great Britain and Tibet, it would be open to the Government of India or their subjects to obtain a concession for the improvement of the roads from India to these trade marts in case the Tibetan Government were to fail to keep them in order; and whether, under the Convention between Great Britain and Russia of 1907, the Government of India and their subjects are debarred from applying to the Tibetan Government for such concession.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am informed by my right hon. friend that the British trade agent at Gyantse is Captain W. F. T. O'Connor, C.I.E., an officer of the Indian Political Department. The trade agent at Gartok is Thakur Jai Chand. There is no British trade agent at Yatung. There is no immediate intention of changing the *status* of these officers. As regards the contingency contemplated by the hon. Member of a failure of the Tibetan Government to carry out their obligations as to roads under Article 5 of the Convention of 1904, the action to be taken in that event would be covered by Article 1 of the Convention with China of 1906, which, as explained in my Answer to the hon. Member's other Question, is again covered by Article 2 of the arrangement with Russia regarding Tibet. Article 9 of the Convention with Tibet does not apply to the contingency contemplated in the hon. Member's Question.

Income-Tax.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that final notices were issued in Scotland on the 6th February demanding payment of arrears of income tax within seven days under penalty of distraint by the sheriff officer; and whether on the same date similar notices were issued in England.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): May I also ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the final notices, threatening distraint for non-payment of income-tax within seven days, were issued in Scotland in the middle of last week; and whether this has been done at an equally early date in England.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Owing to the intervention of the sheriff-officer in Scotland, proceedings for distraint are somewhat slower than in England, where the collector is empowered to distrain immediately on the expiration of the final notice. It is usual therefore for the final notice to be issued about a fortnight earlier in Scotland than in England.

Jamaica.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what sums, if any, have been issued to Jamaica under Section 4 of The Public Works Loan Act, 1907.

MR. ASQUITH: No issue has yet been made, as the Government of Jamaica have not up to the present found it necessary to apply for any part of the loan.

Aldermanbury Explosion.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the verdict of the coroner's jury in the recent inquiry into the fatal explosion which occurred at St. George's Avenue, Aldermanbury, in the City of London, on 1st January last, with a rider attached, pointing to the urgent necessity for an amendment of the law relating to the storage of explosives, whereby local authorities could become licensing authorities instead of being bound to register the application of anyone tendering the sum of 1s., quite irrespective of the suitability of the premises registered; and whether he proposes taking any action in the matter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): My attention has been drawn to this verdict. I am awaiting a report from the Inspector of Explosives on this case which will deal with the question raised by the hon. Member, and the consideration of the point must be deferred until that report is ready. To prevent misunderstanding I may add that the registration in question applies only to the keeping of explosives for retail purposes in small quantities and under strict regulations.

Roachburn Colliery Accident.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the accident at Roachburn Colliery, on 28th January, by which three lives were lost through an inflow of water and moss into the workings of the mine; and whether, as the bodies have not been recovered and as no coroner's inquest has been held, and having regard to the exceptional nature of the accident and to the need for a searching inquiry, he will authorise a formal investigation into the whole circumstances, under Section 45 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887.

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir. In view of the exceptional nature of the accident and of the fact that an inquest may very likely never be held, I think it is desirable that a special inquiry should take place under Section 45 of the Act of 1887, and I am taking the necessary steps for that purpose.

First Aid Certificates for Masters and Mates.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether instructions have been given to oblige Scottish candidates for master and mates first-aid certificates to qualify through St. Andrew's Ambulance instead of St. John; whether he is aware that the yearly St. Andrew's course consists of 144 lectures, while that of St. John is only 52; and that the St. Andrew's Ambulance course is, therefore, more expensive in time and money than that of St. John; will he say whether the St. John Ambulance classes, hitherto conducted on the East Coast of Scotland, have proved satisfactory; and if so, why a system involving more time trouble, and expense is enforced in Scotland, and an easier system deemed sufficient for English candidates.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): Before granting a certificate for master or mate, we require a man to have a knowledge of first-aid to the injured. This he can acquire through attending a course under either of the societies mentioned in the Question. We have been in communication with the two Societies, and as the St. John Ambulance Association inform us that they have centres at one or two Scottish ports only, we have arranged with the St. Andrew's Society that courses should be available at all the chief ports in Scotland. If the suggestion in the Question is that the Board impose attendance at one Society's course rather than the other the hon. and gallant Member is under a misapprehension.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Is the St. John Ambulance course now giving place to the St. Andrew's course to the serious inconvenience of candidates? Is the St. John abolished in Scotland?

MR. KEARLEY: Not at all—where it exists.

Board of Trade—Commercial Intelligence Department.

MR. MACLEAN (Bath): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will take into his consideration the advisability of extending the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade to some of the principal commercial centres of the United Kingdom.

Mr. KEARLEY: Without expressing an opinion on the proposal of my hon. friend, we are prepared to lay the suggestion before the Advisory Committee on Commercial Intelligence.

Post Office Savings Bank.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether, considering the convenience it would be to depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank who receive remittances by cheques or postal or post office orders for odd amounts which they wish to deposit, and also in the accurate keeping of small accounts, and also seeing that there is already a pence column in the Savings Bank books, he can see his way clear to make arrangements whereby such depositors may pay fractions of a shilling into the Bank, provided that no deposit shall be received at any one time of less than a shilling nor any interest paid on such fractions for the time being.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The refusal of the Post Office Savings Bank to take fractions of a shilling on deposit is based on the provisions of the Post Office Savings Bank Act of 1861; and no change could therefore be made without legislation. The hon. Member is no doubt aware that cheques, postal orders or money orders for odd amounts are received for deposit if the amounts are made up to complete shillings. The abolition of the rule forbidding the acceptance by the savings banks of odd pence over and above the minimum deposit of one shilling would enormously increase the cost of administration. As the hon. Member is aware penny stamps can be affixed to a form in order to make up a deposit of one shilling.

American Mail Contract.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether a new contract has been concluded with the Cunard Company for the carriage of the mails to America; and whether he can state the term for which the contract will run, and the amount of the subsidy.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: No new contract for the conveyance of mails between this country and America has been concluded with the Cunard Steamship Company. The present contract was concluded in 1903 and is to remain in force until 1927. The annual subsidy paid to the Cunard Company for the carriage of mails is £68,000.

Hong Kong Mail Contract.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether, before submitting to the House any proposal for a renewal of the Hong Kong mail contract, he will issue a memorandum explaining in what way it is proposed to carry out the declaration made by the Prime Minister in the debate that took place upon this question last session.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: If proposals for the renewal of the Liverpool–Hong-Kong Mail Contract are submitted to the House, full explanations of the proposals will be given, either by Memorandum or in some other manner.

Shanghai Mails.

*Mr. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether, while letters if specially addressed are forwarded from this country to Shanghai *viâ* Siberia, the Post Office refuses to forward commercial papers by this route; and, if so, what is the reason for this refusal.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: In consequence of the very high charges for the conveyance of mails *via* Siberia the British Post Office has been compelled, in common with other European Post Offices generally, to restrict the use of this route to specially addressed letters and postcards.

*Mr. HOLT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, considering the importance to British traders of getting their commercial papers forwarded by the best available means, he will see if he cannot arrange to allow those to use this route who are willing to pay a reasonable surcharge?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not know how far that comes within the terms of the Postal Convention, but if the hon. Member will speak to me I will consider the matter with him.

Radiotelegraphic Convention.

SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether any, and, if so, which, of the self-governing Colonies have informed the Government that they desire to adhere to the Radiotelegraphic Convention.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am glad to say that all the self-governing Colonies have informed the Government that they desire to adhere to the Radiotelegraphic Convention, except Newfoundland, which has not yet communicated its decision, and the Orange River Colony, which, as an inland Colony, sees no necessity at present for adhering.

Wages at the Holloway Factory.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the introduction of piece-work at the Holloway factory has had the effect of materially reducing the wages of the men employed there; whether some of the employees are now receiving for the same amount of work as done at day-rate previously as much as £1 per week less; and, if so, whether it is his intention to reconsider the case of such employees with a view to an improvement in their conditions of labour.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The system of payment by piece-work has been in use at the Holloway factory ever since the factory was established. Occasionally of course there may be a loss on a piece-work job, but the average piece-work earnings show a profit over the day-rates of pay of fully 30 per cent. The Select Committee on Post Office Servants did not recommend any change in the piece-work system.

Wentbridge School, Yorkshire.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will state the reason why the Board of Education refused to sanction a council school at the village of Wentbridge, in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (MR. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The Board did not refuse to sanction a council school, but suggested to the local education authority that, in view of assurances given by the managers of the existing voluntary school that rebuilding would be carried out forthwith, they should withdraw their proposal, which the Board understand was done.

MR. CARLILE: Did the West Riding Education Authority on that occasion give the right hon. Gentleman incorrect information on the subject?

MR. MCKENNA: I cannot say from memory. I have no knowledge of it.

Whitehall Palace.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works what has been the total cost of the works of restoration recently carried out in Whitehall Palace.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): £3,200.

Court of Criminal Appeal.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what the procedure of the Criminal Appeal Act has cost the country in shorthand writers' fees for reporting all possible cases for appeal up to the end of January, 1908; and if a Supplementary Estimate will be presented.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): No cost has yet been incurred, as the Act does not apply to any persons convicted before 18th April, 1908.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Are any more Supplementary Estimates to be submitted?

MR. J. A. PEASE was understood to reply that that hardly arose out of the Question on the Paper, and he could not answer it.

The Customs.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if he will state when the checking allowances consequent on the increase of staff in the Statistical Office of the Customs will be made.

MR. J. A. PEASE: These allowances were assigned on the 3rd instant.

Superannuation.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the number of ex-soldiers and ex-sailors affected by the decision of the Government under the Superannuation Act, 1859.

MR. J. A. PEASE: My hon. friend has no information on this subject.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will the hon. Gentleman get the information?

MR. J. A. PEASE: To do so it would be necessary to circularise other Departments, and we do not think the advantage gained would be commensurate with the trouble and expense involved.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Then does the hon. Gentleman, as representing the Treasury, consider that ex-soldiers and ex-sailors are not worthy of attention?

MR. J. A. PEASE: Not at all. I only say the information asked for is not worth the time and trouble which the collection of it would involve.

Board of Works, Dublin.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that an application was made to the Treasury a short time ago substantially to increase the salary of the staff officer-in-charge in the miscellaneous division of the Board of Works, Dublin; and, considering that this officer is by many years the junior of his grade in the secretary's department, and that his work is no more important than that performed by the other three senior staff officers, and its magnitude is very considerably less than that of the other staff officers in the secretariat, can he say whether this application is to be acceded to.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The Treasury were unable to see any sufficient reason for acceding to the application in question.

Automatic Machines.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been directed to the fact that many automatic machines are so constructed as to, and that they in fact do, continue to invite, receive, and retain coins after their contents are exhausted; and whether he will consider what steps should be taken to stop this fraud on the public.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields): I have no information on this matter and I am afraid I have no means of obtaining any. With regard to the practice suggested to be a fraud on the public, that depends on whether or not the persons who expose these machines do so knowing that they will have a fraudulent effect and that there will be no equivalent return for the money dropped into the slot. That would be somewhat difficult to prove.

Election Expenditure.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been drawn to the habit which has become prevalent in recent years of political organisations spending money during Parliamentary contests on behalf of candidates; whether the law officers have given instructions that candidates' official statements of expenses should be examined to discover whether these payments have been included; and whether it is proposed to draw the attention of the Public Prosecutor to the matter with a view to action being taken.

SIR W. ROBSON: Moneys spent by a political organisation during Parliamentary contests are not necessarily illegal payments nor payments coming within the statutory *maximum* allowed to a candidate. In order that they may be so treated they must be shown to have been spent not merely during the election but also in the conduct or management of the election. There may, for instance, be payments for purposes which are part of the general propaganda of the political organisation itself and made entirely without reference to the expenses of the election. Whether they come under one class or the other is often a very difficult question of fact on which the decisions are not very easy to reconcile. No instructions of the kind suggested have been issued, but if the hon. Member is aware of anything which can be supported by definite evidence I will certainly draw the attention of the Public Prosecutor to it.

Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): Is any distinction made between political organisations and party organisations?

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal S.): And tea party organisations?

Sir W. ROBSON: I am not aware of any distinction that could be drawn between political organisations and party organisations. Most political organisations are party organisations.

Small Holdings in Surrey.

Mr. MARNHAM (Surrey, Chertsey): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been called to the form of application for a small holding recently issued by the Surrey County Council to parish councils within its area, wherein the provisions of the Small Holdings Acts of 1892 and 1907 are so intermixed as to mislead prospective applicants into the belief that, under the provisions of the Act of 1907 it is necessary for an applicant to guarantee one-fifth of the purchase money of such holding; and whether he will take steps to see that county councils are asked to issue immediately separate and distinct application forms relating to the two Acts.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somerset, S.): My noble friend has seen a copy of the form to which my hon. friend refers. He thinks it is better that separate forms of application for leasing and for purchase should be used, and he proposes to call the attention of county councils to the matter at an early date.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that a notice was recently given at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to the effect that Constable Brennan would be stopped six days' annual leave for being improperly dressed while on duty, and that such improper dress consisted only of Constable Brennan having taken off his heavy coat to take up the ashes from the fire-grate and to sweep the paths; and, if so, whether, in view of the character of the offence committed, he will consider the advisability of reducing the punishment.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The form of punishment for offences generally at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is receiving the attention of my noble friend, but as the particular case to which his attention is now drawn occurred last year and the punishment has been carried out, it is not possible now, even if it were thought advisable, to reduce or alter it in any way.

Lammas Lands.

Mr. HERBERT: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether Lammas lands can be taken compulsorily for small holdings; and, if so, whether, as a matter of policy, the Board of Agriculture would be prepared to put the powers of the Act in force for the purpose of taking such lands.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Lammas land can be acquired compulsorily under the Small Holdings Acts with the consent of the Board, but each case would have to be considered on its merits with due regard to the various interests concerned.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Mr. DELANY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can now state what steps the Board of Agriculture propose taking to prevent the further spread of foot-and-mouth disease through the importation of foreign forage.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The matter is receiving careful consideration, but our information on the subject is not yet complete, and no decision has yet been arrived at.

MR. DELANY: Is foreign forage being imported into Scotland at the present time, and if so, does the hon. Gentleman intend to allow it to continue ?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I have said the matter is being carefully inquired into. It is not possible to say more at present.

MR. DELANY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the introduction of the foot-and-mouth disease into Scotland is traceable to the importation of foreign forage; whether he is aware that the military authorities are at present using quantities of this class of forage; and whether, with a view to prevent further spread of disease, he will make representation to the War Office Department on the subject.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Our inquiries as to the manner in which foot-and-mouth disease was recently introduced into Scotland are not yet complete. If it is found to be due to the importation of foreign hay, the suggestion made by the hon. Member will be carefully considered.

Potato Disease.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board are aware that a new and destructive disease of potatoes, known as black scab, has lately been introduced into England, and that outbreaks have now occurred in nine counties, in some cases causing serious losses in allotment gardens; whether the Board are aware that the disease is now being distributed in seed potatoes from affected areas; and whether the Board, in order to prevent this disease from spreading through the country, will deal with the matter at once under the powers conferred on them by the Destructive Insects and Pests Act, 1907.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Perhaps my hon. friend will refer to the replies I gave to similar Questions on the 4th and 6th instant.

Tuberculosis in Scottish Cattle.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he is aware that in Scotland cattle in the last stages of tuberculosis are occasionally exposed for sale and food in the open market, with consequent risk of spread of the disease and danger to human life; and if he proposes to take any steps, by legislation or otherwise, in order that persons submitting dying diseased cattle for sale may be prosecuted.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): Section 43 (1) (*a*) of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, enables the officials of the local authority to seize animals that are intended for the food of man and are exposed for sale, if they are diseased or unsound or unfit for the food of man; and the person to whom the animal belongs is liable to prosecution. The officials of local authorities make use of this power and there does not seem need for fresh legislation in the direction suggested.

MR. CATHCART WASON asked if the purchasers of these cattle were liable to prosecution.

MR. SINCLAIR said that rested with the local authorities.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Will the same steps be taken in this matter as in England ?

MR. SINCLAIR: I am not sure that the powers in England and Scotland are the same, but if those in Scotland are found to be insufficient, I shall be prepared to make further proposals.

Trawling in the Moray Firth.

CAPTAIN WARING (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the trawlers detected in the Moray Firth, known to be British-owned though flying a foreign flag, have been registered in foreign countries for the purpose of attempting to evade the Scottish Fishery Regulations; and, if so, whether it is his intention to take steps to prevent the evasion of the Scottish laws in this manner.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Certain trawlers British-owned have been registered in foreign countries and have subsequently trawled in the Moray Firth contrary to Scottish Fishery Regulations. My hon. friend can form his own opinions of the intention which prompted this registration. I am taking every step in my power to bring offenders to justice.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has any official information showing that many of the trawlers now reported to be at work within the Moray Firth under a foreign flag are mainly owned by British capital and managed by British subjects; and whether he is taking steps to vindicate the law.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I am satisfied from the information at my disposal that the facts are as stated by my hon. friend. I am taking every step in my power to bring all British subjects who are implicated in illegal fishing to justice.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Did not the right hon. Gentleman say last year every "possible" step had been taken, and were not the results absolutely nil? Is it possible to do more than take every possible step?

Mr. SUTHERLAND: How many prosecutions are pending?

Mr. SINCLAIR asked for notice of the Question.

Mr. PIRIE: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer my Question?

Mr. SINCLAIR: Such steps as are in the power of the Government are being taken to bring the offenders to justice.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): What are the steps that have been taken?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I cannot state them in the limits of an Answer to a Question.

Mr. PIRIE: If the steps already taken are found to be insufficient, will the Government obtain further powers?

Mr. SINCLAIR: My hon. friend may be assured that the Government will do all in their power to bring the offenders to justice.

Burra Isles, Orkney.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a petition from the inhabitants of Burra Isle, Orkney, complaining that they are rated by the local authority much higher than they agreed for when the work was first prepared; and whether, under all the circumstances of the case and the poverty of the island he will permit an officer of the Congested Districts Board to furnish a report on the subject, especially with reference to any scheme whereby the working expenses can be decreased or the revenue augmented.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I have received no petition on the subject referred to. The Congested Districts Board gave a grant of three-quarters of the total estimated cost of this work, which has been finished and must be maintained by the county council under the Orkney and Shetland Small Piers and Harbours Act of 1896. I do not think a report such as that suggested by my hon. friend would serve any useful purpose.

Scottish Sheriffs and Sheriffs' Substitute.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether there is any age limit for sheriffs and sheriffs-substitute in Scotland; if so, what is that limit, and how many are there now receiving salaries who have been granted extension; and, if not, will he introduce legislation to put this branch of the service on an equality with others where compulsory retirement is enforced.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Shaw, Hawick Burghs): The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative, which supersedes the second branch of my hon. friend's inquiry. The Answer to the third part is also in the negative.

Ireland and Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

MR. DELANY: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he is aware that the introduction of the foot-and-mouth disease into Scotland is alleged to have been traceable to the importation of foreign forage; and whether he can say what steps he proposes taking to prevent the spread of the disease into Ireland through this source.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The Department are aware that the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Scotland is alleged to have been caused by foreign fodder, but, so far as is known, no similar outbreak attributed to a like cause has ever occurred in Ireland. It would be a difficult matter adequately to enforce precautions against the possible danger of introducing disease through the medium of imported forage, especially in view of the circumstance that forage substances are also used as packing material for goods coming from abroad. The Department are not, in all the circumstances, at present prepared to say whether, so far as Ireland is concerned, any steps can or should be taken in the direction suggested in the Question. Need for steps of the kind would, moreover, seem the less apparent in view of the fact that the latest annual import returns show only one ton of forage as having been landed direct in Ireland from Belgium, the country supposed to be the source of infection in the Scottish outbreak.

Army Forage Contracts in Ireland.

MR. DELANY: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), whether he is aware that the military authorities in Ireland use quantities of foreign forage; and whether, in view of the allegation that it was through the importation of foreign hay into Scotland that foot-and-mouth disease was introduced into that country, he will make representations to the War Office in connection with this matter.

MR. CHERRY: Information as to the sources from which supplies of forage for military purposes in Ireland are obtained has not reached the Department, but, in any case, having regard to the facts stated in reply to the last Question, the Department do not at present propose to address to the military authorities representations of the nature suggested in this further Question.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Have not the Department power to prohibit the importation of this foreign fodder into Ireland?

MR. CHERRY'S reply was inaudible.

Ballinagleva Eviction Notices.

MR. M'HUGH (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether eviction notices have been served on fifteen tenants on the Marshal, Peyton, and West estates, in Ballinagleva, county Leitrim, by the agent, Mr. Hewson, of Dromahaire; is he aware that negotiations for sale and purchase are pending on these estates; will he have inquiry made into the circumstances before sending the forces of the Crown to assist at the eviction of these tenants; and will he request the Estates Commissioners to intervene, with the object of averting suffering and possible violence.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have no knowledge of any contemplated evictions on the estates referred to. No proceedings in respect of these estates are at present pending before the Commissioners. Early last year the Commissioners offered to intervene with the object of aiding in a settlement of the terms of purchase. The agent, however, replied that, in view of the wide divergence between prices offered by the tenants and those which the landlords were prepared to accept, the Commissioners' intervention would be futile. In these circumstances the Commissioners do not see that they can take any further action in the matter.

Irish Local Government Audit Fees.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received from the county council of

Donegal any communication relative to the sums charged for audit by the Local Government Board; whether such charge has been declared by the Courts not to be legally payable; whether the Local Government Board have refused to refund the money; and whether the Irish Government will take any steps in the matter.

MR. CHERRY: I would refer to my Answer to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for East Donegal yesterday.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Has not the Court of King's Bench in Dublin decided that the money has been illegally collected, and will the right hon. Gentleman impress on the Irish Local Government Board the necessity—in the interests of law and order—of refunding the money?

MR. CHERRY: The hon. Member had better put that Question down.

MR. MACVEAGH: I am afraid that the clerks would not let me.

Dummanway Labourers Cottage Scheme.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an Improvement Scheme, under the Labourers Acts, has been promoted by the Dummanway Rural District Council; and will he explain the delay in holding the local inquiry into the scheme, and state whether it is attributable to the district council or the Local Government Board.

MR. CHERRY: The scheme in question has not yet been submitted by the rural district council to the Local Government Board for confirmation. The district council have had the matter in hand since 1st February, 1907.

Drishane Desmesne Lands.

MR. SHEEHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether an inspector of the Estates Commissioners recently valued the desmesne lands of Drishane, Millstreet, County Cork, on the estate of H. A. B. Wallis; did this valuation take place with the object of acquiring these lands for distribution purposes; and, if so, will the claims of local evicted tenants be considered in connection with the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners had an inspection made of the property referred to, and upon consideration of the inspector's report formed the conclusion that the lands were not suitable for their purposes. The Commissioners, however, having been asked to reconsider the matter, have ordered a second inspection. If the lands should be acquired, the claims of local evicted tenants will receive due consideration.

Grading of Irish Teachers.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state why, on the introduction of the grading system, national teachers with no unfavourable record were not placed in grades corresponding to their classification at that time; whether in schools where teachers after years of hard study succeeded in obtaining first division of first class, and where proficiency is recorded as good on every occasion, even very good on some occasions, the principal teacher has been placed and kept in the lower grade while assistants in the same schools have been awarded increments on every occasion where they became due; whether, in such cases, the former classification does in any way aid in obtaining the corresponding grade; and whether the Commissioners can consider these matters with a view to the removal of what is an injustice to this hard-working body of teachers.

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners of National Education have furnished me with a very full statement which cannot well be compressed within the limits of an oral Answer. With the hon. Member's permission I will furnish a printed Answer with to-night's Votes

Medical Inspection of Irish School Children.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolution of the Irish Committee of the British Medical Association, urging the necessity of the medical inspection of school children in Ireland on the lines already adopted by legislation with regard to England; and whether, having regard to the fact that every argument for such inspection in England applies with even greater force to Ireland, he will consider whether steps can be taken to give effect to this recommendation.

Mr. CHERRY: I have received a communication from the Irish Committee of the British Medical Association to the effect stated in the Question. I have been in communication with the Commissioners of National Education upon the subject generally, and the matter is to be further considered by the Commissioners at their meeting next week. I would, therefore, ask the hon. Member to defer the Question for the present.

Arrest of Mr. Thos. O'Donnell, C.C.

Mr. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which I have given him private notice, viz., whether on Sunday night last at about ten o'clock, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, county councillor, and two other persons were arrested and brought to the police barracks in Tuam; whether they were detained without a warrant in the barracks all night, and until four o'clock the following evening; whether the police authorities twice refused the request of Mr. Glynn, solicitor, to have a local magistrate, three of whom were available, sent for to take the depositions in the case; whether it was only after the police had failed in their efforts to secure the attendance of resident magistrates from Ballinrobe and Loughrea that they consented to allow a local magistrate to act; and, if so, can he state what is the explanation of this action on the part of the police, seeing that all that was required was to get a justice to give a remand to petty sessions.

Mr. CHERRY: I am afraid I have not the information enabling me to answer the Question, but if the hon. Member will put his Question down my right hon. friend will no doubt reply to it on Monday.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

*Mr. BARKER (Penryn and Falmouth) asked when it was proposed to take the Vote which made provision for carrying out the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked as to the course of business next week and specially when the debate on the Anglo-Russian Convention would be taken.

Mr. ASQUITH: Monday will be devoted to the Irish Resolution; Tuesday to the Scottish Small Landholders Bill; Wednesday to the discussion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement; and Thursday to Post Office and other Supplementary Estimates. The Licensing Bill will not be taken next week.

NEW BILLS.

NURSES (REGISTRATION) BILL.

"To regulate the Qualifications and Registration of Trained Nurses," presented by Mr. Claude Hay; supported by Sir Arthur Bignold; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 78.]

CONVEYANCING BILL.

"To amend the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act 1881," presented by Mr. Hills; supported by Mr. Beale, Mr. Buckmaster, Mr. Cave, and Mr. Micklem; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 79.]

SETTLED LAND BILL.

"To amend the Settled Land Acts, 1882 to 1890," presented by Mr. Hills; supported by Mr. Beale, Mr. Buckmaster, and Mr. Micklem; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 80.]

PENSIONS (OLD AGE) BILL.

"To provide Pensions for poor persons over the age of 65 years," presented by Sir Walter Foster; supported by Sir Alfred Thomas; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 81.]

HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and otherwise to facilitate the building of houses for the Working Classes in rural districts," presented by Sir Walter Foster; supported by Sir Francis Channing, Mr. Soames, Mr. Hart-Davies, and Mr. Nicholls; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 82.]

FERRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

"To confer on county councils in Ireland the power to establish and maintain Ferries; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Gwynn; supported by Mr. Clancy, Mr. John Roche, Mr. Duffy, Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Hazleton, and Mr. Fetherstonhaugh; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 83.]

LUGGAGE (DEFINITION) BILL.

"To define Luggage on Railways with respect to bicycles," presented by Mr. Thorne; supported by Mr. O'Grady, Mr. Parker, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Gill, Mr. Tyson Wilson, Mr. Summerbell, and Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards; to be read a second time upon Friday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 84.]

VOTERS (QUALIFICATION AND REGISTRATION) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Qualification and Registration of Voters and for other purposes relating to Elections," presented by Mr. Hedges; supported by Mr. Brodie, Mr. Marnham, Mr. Micklem, and Mr. Rowlands; to be read a second time upon Friday, 28th February, and to be printed. [Bill 85.]

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS (ADVERTISING) BILL.

"To enable Urban District Councils to advertise the attractions and advantages of their districts," presented by Sir Thomas Roe; supported by Mr. Godfrey Baring, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Nield, Mr. Herbert Roberts, and Mr. Luke White; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 2nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 86.]

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ADMISSION OF THE PRESS) BILL.

"To provide for the Admission of representatives of the Press to the Meetings of certain Local Authorities," presented by Mr. Arthur Henderson; supported by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. George Roberts, Mr. Charles Duncan, Mr. Clynes, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Lief Jones, Mr. Scott, Mr. Hodge, Mr. Summerbell, Sir John Randles, and Sir Gilbert Parker; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 10th March, and to be printed. [Bill 87.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Ordered, That the proceedings on the Motion for the Allocation of Time with respect to the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill have precedence this day of the Business of Supply.—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL AND LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL (ALLOCATION OF TIME).

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [12th February], "That in the case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee stage, and Report stage of the Bill (including the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner: (*a*) The Committee stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day; and the Bill shall, when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the Whole House without Question put; (*b*) the Report Stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) and the Committee Stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House, and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put; (*c*) if the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report Stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the third allotted day. After this Order comes into operation, any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first Order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m., and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to a conclusion), put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee Stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this Order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business to be brought to a conclusion are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day being allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of."—(*Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.*)

Question again proposed.

MR. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks) in moving to insert after the word "That" the words "this House declines further to curtail its liberty of discussion until the Government have laid upon the Table of the House their general scheme for dealing with Bills involving matters of controversy," said: The debate upon the Resolution which the Prime Minister yesterday submitted to the House has covered a wide field, and to a larger extent than usual the results have been fruitful, for it has given the Prime Minister an opportunity of making a statement of the greatest possible importance. The Prime Minister took the opportunity of telling the House and the country yesterday that in his opinion, an opinion formed with all the gravity and all the deliberation that characterises the statements of the Prime Minister in this House, the action which the House of Lords took with reference to one at any rate of the Bills concerned in this Motion was an action which was entirely reasonable. That is a statement which we welcome and with which we agree, and I am bound to say that I for one welcome the unusual unanimity with which the Prime Minister and those who sit on these benches regard this point. I would assure the Prime Minister, if he were able to be present, that we should treasure the recollection of so fair-minded a statement. If I may make one further observation with reference to this point, I should say that I at any rate think I can at last understand the significant omission from the gracious Speech from the Throne of all reference to the vexed question of any possible conflict between the two Houses of the Legislature. I turn from that aspect of the Resolution moved by the Prime Minister and come at once to the Amendment which I have risen to submit to the House. The points with which I propose to deal in the few moments for which I shall ask the House to listen to me are necessarily narrower than the points covered yesterday, but while they primarily concern the House of Commons, they must necessarily affect the whole working of our Parliamentary machine. It will not be denied that during the two years of office which the present Government have enjoyed they have introduced sweeping changes into the procedure of the House of Commons. We may differ as to whether or not the result of these changes is to increase the efficiency of the House; we may differ as to whether or not it makes the lot of the private Member more or less tolerable than before; but we are all agreed that great changes in our procedure have been made, and I should like to remind the House what these changes have been. In the first place, the Government have revolutionised our system of Committees. They have substituted to a large extent the working of the Standing Committees for the working of the Whole House. While they have availed themselves of the great extension of the Standing Committees which they have set up, they have brought about a new method of using the Committees for the consideration of the Bills which they have brought into the House of Commons. All the experience we have been able to gather of the Standing Committees has been that these Committees do useful work where the Bills they are called upon to consider are comparatively speaking, non-contentious, but that they break down hopelessly when the Bills sent to them involve a large amount of controversy. The hon. Member for the Leith Burghs expressed the same view yesterday, and I am happy to find myself in agreement with him. When the Government were inviting the House to sanction the creation of the new Standing Committees they distinctly gave us to understand that it was not their intention to submit to these Standing Committees the more important or the more controversial of the Bills which they brought in during the session. It was to a large extent, I think, on the assurance which the Government then gave to the House that these rules were passed. Our experience of the working of the Standing Committees and of these rules has disappointed the hopes and expectations of the House formed at that time. Anyone who knows the history of last session will know that the Government did exactly the opposite of what they said they were going to do when these rules were passed, and, so far from the main controversial Bills being kept in the House, and the minor and non-controversial Bills sent upstairs, we have had the experience of perhaps the most controversial measure of the whole session being sent upstairs to one of the Standing Committees, while the House was kept night after night to the small hours of the morning for the last few weeks of the session passing a large number of departmental Bills. I suppose it can hardly be contended that the Scottish Small Landholders Bill is improperly included in the category of the controversial Bills of the session. Its importance is admitted; its importance cannot be denied. No one will deny after the experience we have had of that measure that it is controversial to a peculiar extent. If it is one of the most controversial Bills of the session, then the Government violated the pledges which they gave to the House that these Bills would be kept downstairs. If, on the other hand, it is not one of the most controversial Bills of the session, then I think the frenzied efforts made by hon. Gentlemen opposite to inflame the feelings of the people of Scotland against the House of Lords seem to lack point.

I should like to say one or two words upon the Government's method of dealing with the Bills after they have passed through the Standing Committees. Let me remind the House that there is no official means by which we can obtain a detailed report of the proceedings of the Standing Committees. That is one of their great defects when they are called upon to consider Bills of an important character. The hon. Member for Leicester, speaking last night on behalf of a minority section of the House, said they were bound to examine with minute care the question whether or not this proposal threatened danger to the rights of minorities and to free discussion, and the hon. Member found consolation in the fact that the Scottish Small Landholders Bill, at any rate, had been debated in the Standing Committee for twenty-two days. The hon. Member said that after that it was impossible to say that the Prime Minister's Resolution threatened any danger to the right of free discussion on the part of the minority. It seems to me that the hon. Member for Leicester left out of account the real value of free discussion. The value of free discussion is not the making of speeches. It is to a certain extent to influence the course of legislation, but the real value of free discussion is to enable the country to follow day by day, and hour by hour, the questions which are being threshed out in the House of Commons, and it is only by that means that the country is able to form a sane, sober, and reasoned judgment upon the various points involved. The debates in the Standing Committees give no opportunity whatever for the country to realise or to understand the points which are raised. They have no knowledge of them whatever, and neither has the House of Commons itself; and yet in spite of the fact that the country is not able to form a reasoned judgment as to the points involved, and in spite of the fact that the House of Commons, as a whole, has no means of finding out what has taken place before a Standing Committee, the Government has settled for the first time in the history of the House of Commons that Bills coming down on report from the Standing Committees shall be subjected to a strict limitation of time. That is the second of the new departures in the matter of procedure which the Government have indulged in. I pass over the fact of the Scottish Small Landholders Bill having been closured to a most extraordinary extent while it was before the Standing Committee. The figures were given yesterday. The Standing Committee considered the Bill on twenty-two days. I understand from a Return which was moved for last session that the closure was moved in that Committee no fewer than fifty-nine times, and I ask the House to compare that with the number of times the closure was moved in this House during the whole session. In this House and in Committee of the Whole House throughout the whole session the closure was moved only sixty-six times. It seems to me that it is absolutely impossible in view of these figures to contend that the rights of the minority to free and full discussion, even in the Standing Committee, is adequately safeguarded. The Government are not content with a measure of closure so drastic as the guillotining on the Report stage of Bills which come back from the Standing Committees. They invented a new system of guillotine by which in respect of Bills the Committee stage of which they keep in this House before the Committee stage was entered upon at all, they laid down a strict limitation of the Committee stage, the Report stage, and the Third Reading stage. That was done in the case of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill of last session, so that we had to conduct the whole of our detailed discussions on that most important subject under the black shadow of the guillotine. Now they propose, in the Resolution which has been submitted to the House, to carry this thing a stage further still. We shall, if we pass this Resolution, set up a strict limitation of the time which shall govern the whole of the discussion which is to take place on these two Bills. I am not arguing now whether they are justified in the peculiar circumstances of the case in treating these Bills in this way. What I am arguing is that they are increasing step by step the use of a new and drastic measure in respect to matters submitted to the House of Commons. It is as if the appetite had grown by what it fed on. I have read that a surgeon becomes more and more addicted to the use of the knife. I do not know whether that is true or not. I think the experience of the last twelve months — and all these innovations have taken place in the last twelve months—leads me to suppose that the Government are becoming more and more addicted to the use of these drastic measures of closure. How far is it going to extend? Are the Government when they get this precedent going to apply this system to all their Bills throughout the session? The question was asked by an hon. Member opposite yesterday afternoon, and he suggested that the system which is to be applied to Bills in exceptional cases now is but a step to the extension of that system by which, immediately after the Address in reply to the gracious Speech from the Throne has been voted, the Government will lay before the House a detailed scheme for the whole session, allocating the time for each Bill they propose to bring forward. It seems to me that if they once get this precedent to refer to they will apply it to other Bills at other portions of the session, and will advance the same reason for doing it, namely, to send Bills up to the House of Lords in such time as will give that House time to discuss them fully in all their bearings. I do not pretend for a moment that our Rules of Procedure are perfect. I grant, and it has been admitted over and over again from this side of the House, that the Government must have time for the legislation they think it right to pass. I do not doubt they would say in answer to our criticism, "After all, we are only using the weapon which you yourselves forged." But the question is not whether they are justified in using it, but how they use it. True we forged it; but we forged it for use only in exceptional circumstances. But if we are to judge by present methods of conducting the business of the House, it has become a matter of everyday practice by the present Government to use that weapon. It seems to me that there is a very great difference between a policeman who keeps his truncheon in his pocket for use in moments of emergency and a policeman who finds it essential to brandish his truncheon in the exercise of his duty at every moment of the day. If a policeman was to go with his truncheon always in his hands he would not be tolerated for a moment. The Prime Minister is the policeman with a truncheon always in his hands, as if it were impossible to conduct the business of the House without resorting to these exceptional measures. I say that the present system, or rather lack of system, cannot be satisfactory to anybody. To my mind it impairs the dignity of the House, hinders the despatch of business, prevents the country being properly informed as to the proceedings of Parliament, and lends colour to the view that the objects of the Government are concerned more with the supposed benefit of the Party to which they belong than with the real interests of the country as a whole. The rights of private Members and the liberty of free discussion have been trampled under foot. The very Rules of Procedure under which our proceedings are conducted were guillotined time and again; and I venture to say that if we had been allowed to debate them fully and freely some of the difficulties from which we now suffer would have been obviated. We find our expectations disappointed; the situation is full of doubt, uncertainty and danger to the efficient conduct of the business of the House. Step by step barriers along the road of free discussion have been erected. Step by step has it been made more and more difficult to private Members to take any useful part at all in discussion or legislation. Let me remind the House of the four points I have mentioned: The alteration of the system of Committees; the introduction of the guillotine on the Report and Third Reading stages of Bills when they come from Standing Committees; the introduction of the guillotine at all stages of Bills which are kept in Committee of the Whole House after the Second Reading; and, finally, the guillotining of all stages of Bills after they have been laid on the Table of the House. It is impossible to believe that the Government are content to drift along in this way without plan and apparently without the slightest care for the reputation and traditions of the House. I move the Amendment standing in my name in order to give the Government an opportunity of taking the House frankly into their confidence as to what they intend to do in regard to special Rules of Procedure. I hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to give us definite information and assurance on that point. The House of Commons used to be a great debating Assembly in which proposed legislation was criticised, its faults exposed, and Amendments carried. But under the despotic sway of the present Government, debate is stifled and criticism is dead. Bills are withdrawn from the consideration of the House altogether and sent to Standing Committees upstairs, where they disappear for months at a time. The House of Commons is deprived of the power of criticising and amending legislation. In a word, it exists merely to register the decrees of the Executive Government. Let the Government restore to the House of Commons some of that liberty and right of free discussion of which they have done so much to deprive it. If they will not do that, then I beg the House to pause before sanctioning this further inroad upon the rights of free speech, unless they are to abrogate altogether their rights for all future time. I beg to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out all after the word 'That,' and add the words 'this House declines further to curtail its liberty of discussion until the Government have laid upon the Table of the House their general scheme for dealing with Bills involving matters of controversy.'"—(*Mr. Forster.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'in the case of' stand part of the Question."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The hon. Gentleman has made an able and an interesting speech, though I confess I did not through the greater part of it trace any direct connection between his arguments and the Amendment. He indulged in some flights of imagination, as, for instance, in his picture of the mild and benignant figure of the Prime Minister violating all the best traditions of Parliament, and wielding, in truculent mood, a truncheon in order to belabour the heads and curtail the liberties of the Members of this House—a masterpiece of ingenious but infelicitous caricature. As regards the bulk of the hon. Gentleman's speech, I listened to it with that sort of feeling one sometimes has that poets have fancied—the dim imagination of what has happened to us in a previous sphere of existence, which comes sometimes like clouds of glory and sometimes, I am afraid, in a less inspiring form. But as I heard the hon. Gentleman I seemed to be listening to dim echoes of speeches which I am afraid I myself have made in previous years when other Governments were in power, when, as we thought, these sacred and time-honoured liberties of the House of Commons were being just as much jeopardised and endangered as the hon. Gentleman thinks they are to-day. I do not make the observation in any spirit of recrimination, but I think we all ought to agree that this is a very serious problem which ought to be confronted, if we can confront it, with something like a general consensus and general action. My right hon. friend told the House yesterday that the Government are seriously and most anxiously engaged in considering whether it is not possible to devise some procedure and some machinery by which we can get rid of the guillotine, the use of which has become increasingly common in late years, whatever Government was in power, and give to a tribunal which will command the general confidence of the House some discretion as to the proper allocation of our time as between different subjects, and, I will add, as between different parts of the same subject. That is a matter which, I entirely agree, is very urgent and eminently worth the consideration of all parts of the House. But I venture to think it has very little to do with the particular Motion which is now under discussion. We are not dealing here with fresh legislation of the present session. We are not dealing here with projects which have not already been submitted to the consideration and discussion of the House of Commons. If we were proposing arbitrarily to abridge the time which was to be given to the discussion of any proposal of that kind, then I quite agree that the great bulk of the hon. Gentleman's speech might be not only relevant, but very cogent. But that is not the case. We are dealing with the case of a measure which went through this House after more or less discussion last session, and one of the main reasons—I do not say the only reason—given by the House of Lords for not considering the Bill was that it arrived at that House at so late a period of the session that there was not adequate time to give it proper consideration. The object of this Motion is to enable the House to send these measures, which have already been discussed, to the House of Lords at such an early date of the session that they will have no reasonable ground for saying that there is not ample time to consider them in all their bearings. The whole point of the hon.

Gentleman's speech, in so far as it is relevant to the Motion, comes back to the point made by the Prime Minister yesterday, namely, Was an adequate opportunity, or was it not, offered last session for the discussion of these measures? As regards the Small Landholders Bill, what are the facts? I think that three days on Second Reading, twenty-two days in Committee upstairs, three days on Report, and another day for Third Reading were allowed. Is that, or is that not, ample time for the discussion of this measure? Outside the walls of this House you could not get any audience in the country to listen for a moment to the suggestion that, if the proceedings were conducted, as people assume they are, in a businesslike fashion, there was not ample time for the discussion not only of the principle, but of the details of the measure. The only other point which the hon. Gentleman makes is that the Bill was improperly sent to a Standing Committee. The Government, he said, undertook not to send controversial measures to those Committees, and this was a controversial measure. I agree that, as a rule, it is not desirable that measures of a highly controversial kind should be sent to a Committee upstairs, but there was a special reason for dealing in this way with this particular Bill, which was that it affected Scotland and Scotland alone. No other part of the United Kingdom had any direct concern in any one of its provisions, and with the general assent of the House of Commons we created a Standing Committee containing the whole of the representatives of Scotland, and the very object of that Committee was that measures relating to Scotland alone should, so far as the Committee stage was concerned, be discussed where Scottish opinion was predominant. And when it is said that the proceedings of that Committee, where the closure was extravagantly used, from the fact of the Committee being held upstairs, were not known to the public, I have here a volume containing the detailed reports published in the *Scotsman.*

MR. FORSTER: They are not official.

MR. ASQUITH: No report of what goes on in Committees upstairs is official. The proceedings of this Committee were not reported at length in *The Times* because their readers had no concern in them whatever; but the people mostly concerned were kept most minutely and accurately informed day by day of what was going on. Then, as regards the point about the use or abuse of the closure, I should like to read a sentence from the report of the proceedings which appeared in the *Scotsman* on Wednesday, 5th June—

> "The Standing Committee on Scottish Bills held their sixth meeting yesterday at Westminster for the further consideration of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill. There was a large attendance of members. Mr. Walter Long resumed the debate on Mr. Munro-Ferguson's Amendment for the rejection of Clause 1, which applies the Crofters Act throughout Scotland."

That was the sixth day of the Committee, and they were still engaged in discussing an Amendment for the rejection of Clause 1. Does anyone suppose that, if the proceedings had been in Committee of the Whole House, the closure would not have been applied by any Chairman? [Mr. CHAPLIN made an observation across the Table which did not reach the Gallery.] The right hon. Gentleman alludes to the days when there was no closure and when very little legislation was carried through; but the Government of which he was a member resorted to the closure with great freedom, and every Government, to whatever Party it belongs, will find the closure an indispensable instrument if any legislation at all is to be carried through. At any rate, the proceedings of this Committee show that the Government was not unduly precipitate in the application of the closure. I do not want to go over again the topics that were discussed so fully yesterday, and I submit to the House, in the first place, that we were thoroughly justified in sending the Bill to the Scottish Grand Committee; and, in the second place, that the length of time it occupied is a sufficient guarantee that ample publicity was given to all its details and that they were thoroughly thrashed out. With regard to the Land Values Bill, it is admitted that the closure was never applied during the whole of the discussion. Dealing, as we are, with measures not for the first time, but after ample discussion in the previous session, and dealing with them in a manner which gives the House an opportunity, first on the Second Reading of saying whether they adhere to the principle of the Bills, and then in Committee of moving reasonable Amendments, I submit that this procedure, though I quite agree that it is exceptional, is thoroughly warranted by the special circumstances of the case, and that therefore the Amendment is one which cannot be justified.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the reply which he has just made began by saying that my hon. friend's speech, to which he paid a courteous and well-merited compliment, was in no way directed or closely directed to the Motion on the Paper. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself has devoted most of his address to the House to giving an account of the proceedings which took place in the Standing Committee, and if he is justified in making that complaint of my hon. friend's speech, I can only say, as one who spent many days in that Committee, that a greater travesty of what took place than the account given by the right hon. Gentleman it is impossible to conceive. The right hon. Gentleman based his contention that the closure was justified and the debate was adequate, on one single instance; he says in tones of horror to the House, that on the sixth day of the Committee, Clause 1 was still under debate.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow): The world was made in six days.

MR. WALTER LONG: Yes, Sir, it is perfectly true that the world was made in six days and that Clause 1 was discussed for six days, but what the Chancellor of the Exchequer omitted to tell the House was that during those six days a much larger number of Members on the Government side of the House, than of Members of the Opposition, took part in the debate. He forgot to tell the House that that clause, by the admission of the Minister in charge of the Bill and of everybody who has studied the Bill, contains the main and to us the most objectionable principle in the Bill. That clause proposes to establish fixity of tenure in Scotland, and what experience have we in this country of fixity of tenure? We have only had it in its application to Irish land legislation. The right hon. Gentleman said that a small knot of English Members opposed the Bill, but he forgot that in the opposition to that Bill in the Grand Committee there were Scottish Members concerned, who because they happened to sit on this side of the House are not apparently entitled to be called Scottish Members equally with hon. Gentlemen opposite.

MR. ASQUITH: I did not say anything of the sort. What I said was that the delay was largely due to the action of a small knot of Members.

MR. WALTER LONG: I do not wish to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman, and possibly the language I used may have been incorrect. But I will put it in another way, and that is, that it seemed to me that the right hon. Gentleman entirely ignored the opposition of Scottish Members, one of whom who sits on his own side of the House is acknowledged to have certainly no equal in his knowledge of Scottish agriculture. Scottish Members took a part in this opposition, and English Members are to be blamed for discussing this Bill because it affected Scotland alone. I deny that absolutely. It is perfectly true that this Bill applies only to Scotland, and, as I have said once during this debate, for the first time in my life I rejoice that Scottish laws are not to be applied to England. I have envied Scotland many of her laws, but when it is sought by the Government to apply to the Scottish land system almost precisely the same principle that was applied to Ireland, then I rejoice that England is not to be placed under the same disability. But is the right hon. Gentleman justified in saying that this Bill only affects Scotland? What is our experience of the application of this kind of law to Ireland? Has that been an Irish question alone? Has not this country been called upon to make great sacrifices and to find large sums of money in order to carry out consequential legislation, which became necessary through the provisions which were enacted in the case of Ireland? There is no proof and there can be no proof that if this system is applied to Scotland you will not have to apply the same process of legislation that has been found necessary in Ireland. And if that is so, then it ceases to be merely a question affecting Scotland, and becomes a question affecting the whole of the United Kingdom and the taxpayers who have to find this money. Therefore the small knot of Members were absolutely justified in their action. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in defending the proceedings in Committee upstairs told us that those proceedings were reported at great length in the *Scotsman.* That reminds me that during the discussion of the new rules last session, I ventured to assure the Government that if they were going to make the Grand Committees take upon their shoulders a considerable share of the work which had hitherto been done down here, they must take a different view of the word "controversial" from that which was taken on either side of the House, and they must see that there was a full and official record of what took place in those Committees. But what says the Chancellor of the Exchequer? He produces a bundle of papers and points in triumph to an abundant report which I gratefully acknowledge, and which I believe to be an accurate report, which appeared in the *Scotsman*; but if during the course of the proceedings we quote the *Scotsman* as a record of information, do hon. Gentlemen opposite accept it? We ask them to accept it, and they say "where did that come from." We state that it is from the *Scotsman*, and they receive it in a very different way from that in which they received the right hon. Gentleman's speech to-day when he quoted the reports of the *Scotsman* as a reliable account of what took place in the Grand Committee. My hon. friend who moved this Amendment asks the House to affirm that the Resolution is an undue abridgment of the liberty of discussion of this House and ought not to be made without a full disclosure of the nature of the general scheme of the Government for dealing with Bills involving matters of controversy, and he seemed to me to justify his case entirely by the arguments he used. The right hon. Gentleman only gave one answer to his contention. He argued that the closure was not unfairly imposed. I am one of those who look upon the closure as having long become part of our procedure. I remember the closure being moved again and again when we were in office, and I do not suppose the Opposition thought that it was properly moved; it is generally the case that the Opposition do not agree with its being moved by their opponents. Our contention in this case was not that the closure was moved improperly; certainly our contention was not and is not that the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill exercised his powers with any desire to deprive us of our rights or to act unfairly towards us. We never made any suggestion of the kind, and if last session the right hon. Gentleman derived some such impression from the speeches we made, I can only say it was never intended by any one of us. What we urged as regards these Grand Committees is what we urge now, that here on the floor of the House of Commons, with the Speaker or the Chairman, who are the officials of the House charged directly with the exercise of the right to say whether the closure shall be used or not, in the chair,—here in full gaze of the public eye the use of the closure is bound to be subject to a check and a control which is impossible and does not exist in the Committees upstairs. I appeal to anybody who has ever been responsible for the conduct of a Bill in this House to think what are the reasons which would lead him to decide that the closure shall be moved. What is the first consideration he puts before himself? It is, at what stage can the closure be used so as to advance business, to secure necessary debate, and to insure that the time shall be properly applied. Clause 1 contained an important part of the Bill—fixity of tenure applied to the whole of Scotland, irrespective of whether a case was made out for amending the Crofters Act or not; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that Members of Parliament are fully protected when it has been discussed for something less than twenty-four hours. The right hon. Gentleman talks about six days. We used to meet at half-past eleven and were supposed to return in time to come down to the House, but so anxious were they to hurry their work through that they forced us ultimately to sit there when the House was sitting. Six days then means twenty-four hours, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks that an adequate and full discussion for the application of a principle which nobody so far as I know pretends has been really satisfactory in the only case where it has been applied, and for the application of which, to this part of the United Kingdom, so far as we know no reason had been given. The closure was not moved with any sort of improper motive nor, so far as I know, in any way which could be described as unjust, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has some foundation when he says six days were given to Clause 1, though on many subsequent parts the closure was moved when far less time had been given to important questions. During these debates the closure was moved frequently when in our judgment very grave questions had not been discussed at all—the constitution of the Court, the setting up in Scotland of a Land Court, which is another question altogether, quite distinct from fixity of tenure and was discussed only in the most meagre fashion. I am not blaming the Secretary for Scotland for his management of the business, but the proceedings in the Committee proved conclusively that if you are going to exercise, as you did for the first time last session, the same rights of closure that you exercised here, you ought to have at all events the same protection for the minority in the publicity of your proceedings and a record of what takes place. It is for that reason and on these grounds that we object to the powers of closure given in Grand Committee. Does not this therefore mean that the change which the Government propose is one which curtails the liberties of this House? Bills which have hitherto been debated here are to go to Grand Committees to be forced through by a purely party majority, and if they meet with non-acceptance they are to be sent up again in the next session. The Leader of the Opposition dwelt with some sarcasm yesterday upon the attitude of the Government who proposed to send up these Bills after three days discussion, to be passed practically as they are. I do not believe there is another man who has ever been responsible for a Bill which has not passed—I do not care how long he has had for its preparation—who would not if he had the opportunity gladly take it back and largely alter it before re-offering it to the House of Commons. And yet this Ministry of all the talents are so confident that they cannot go wrong that they, in the early hours of the session, ask us to take, in exactly the same form as it was introduced last year, a Bill which, I am convinced, if they were to approach its re-consideration now, they would find could from their point of view be materially improved without affecting its main principle. Is this not a curtailment of the liberties of the House of Commons? The Valuation Bill was brought in at the end of the session and discussed in the early hours of the morning. It was a Bill of extraordinary complexity, in regard to which its own promoters did not agree, either as to what its effect would be or how that effect was to be carried out. That Bill is now again brought in in exactly the form in which it was last session and no advantage is taken of those debates to amend it so as to meet in some way the views of those who criticised it. I believe there are very few cases in which any Government, however big its majority or however strong in intellectual power the Government itself has been—and in these respects the Government is fully entitled to claim that it enjoys both to the fullest extent—has ever yet succeeded in forcing legislation through the Houses of Parliament unless it was prepared to have some regard for the views and criticisms of those who differed from it. Has there been any such regard in this case? Has any concession worth talking of been made to the Opposition? Here and there something was conceded, but generally after prolonged debate. If those conclusions had been made at the beginning they would have saved a great deal of time. If the time was long the responsibility does not rest with the Opposition, but with those who were responsible for the Bill, and who if they had made their concessions earlier would have saved considerable debate. I have no hesitation in supporting the Amendment, not only for the reasons which have been given, but because if we are going in the future to have useful and practical legislation which, when it is passed into law, will be accepted by the people, it must be legislation which has been discussed in the full light of day. The public mind will not have been able to follow it in its passage through Parliament if this procedure is adopted. I believe the change is a far more serious one than the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to believe. He says the Amendment is only a revival of the old argument often used here in days gone by. I differ. This is a change which has never been proposed before, as the Prime Minister admitted yesterday. It is a change of a far-reaching kind. The right hon. Gentleman is going to transfer work in regard to many of our Bills from the floor of the House to the

Committee rooms upstairs. It is going to effect an extraordinary revolution in the business of Parliament. It is because I believe that revolution to be a bad one, and because I believe it will result possibly in more work, but if so, in bad work, that I heartily support the Amendment.

*MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said he understood that his colleague the Member for Leicester had already voiced the position of the Labour Party in regard to the constitutional issues involved in the proposals of the Prime Minister, and also in regard to the proposal to carry over a Bill to the next session in the event of its not having found its way on to the Statute-book. He would like to endorse what his hon. friend had said on that point, and to express the opinion that it was absurd to expect them to listen to a great many speeches, most of them of a repetition character, in passing the Bill again. But he was a Scottish Member, as well as a member of the Labour Party, and therefore it fell to his lot to have opportunities of getting to know what was denied to the hon. Member for Leicester, first, as to the time spent upon the Small Landholders Bill and the use made of the time, and, secondly, as to the feeling in Scotland in regard to the two Bills under discussion. He was astounded to read in the Press that morning a statement by the Leader of the Opposition that full and adequate time had not been devoted to the Small Landholders Bill last session, and he could only conclude that the right hon. Gentleman was actually in ignorance of the time spent and the use made of it. It seemed to him that the three days devoted to the Second Reading were ample for the occasion. Most of the speeches at the end of the debate at all events came from one side of the House, and it actually fizzled out, for even if longer time had been devoted to it little use would have been made of it. The right hon. Member for South Dublin had said that the six days that were devoted in Committee upstairs to the first clause of the Bill were devoted to the most important principle in the Bill. That was perfectly true, but the principle of the Bill was assented to, or at all events sufficiently discussed in the House, and what was left for the Committee was not to rediscuss the Bill and the principles involved in it, but to try to shake themselves down and frame the Bill in such a way in detail as to make it workable in its practical details. He had no hesitation in saying that adequate time was given. The Committee discussed every clause of the Bill. In the early stages they had discussed every sentence and every line, and he was inclined to think some would have discussed every word. The talk was mostly on the part of those who were not Scottish Members at all, and the freedom that was allowed was carried almost, if not quite, to the point of abuse. As to the feeling of the people of Scotland in regard to the Bill, could there be any doubt about it? He thought it was sufficient to take the attitude of the Scottish Members, by the bulk of whom the Bill was not opposed. It was opposed by Gentlemen who, following the lead of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, had during his (Mr. Barnes) two years in the House opposed every single measure that had been proposed, of economic, political, or social freedom. So far as they were concerned he took little stock of their attitude in regard to this Bill. With the exception of the hon. Member for Leith Burghs, the Scottish Members were friendly disposed towards the Bill, and that was sufficient to indicate the feeling of the people of Scotland. If anything else were needed he would remind the House of the most significantly representative meeting held at Perth at the time the Bill was under discussion, at which representatives from all parts of Scotland gave their adhesion in no uncertain sound, and indicated that they were sincerely anxious that the Bill should become law It had been said that the other Bill, the Land Values Bill, was one of extraordinary complexity. To his mind it was extremely simple, and it was because of its simplicity that they had the justification for its being submitted to the House so late as it was. The Small Landholders Bill was submitted early so as to allow ample time for its discussion there and in another place. He hoped the Government would stick to its guns in regard to this Resolution. If they did one of two things would happen. Either the Bills would be passed or they would be faced with a constitutional crisis that he wanted to avert. If that issue were raised, he did not believe the people of the country would be content to take it in the moderate form in which it was proposed by the Government. He had sufficient faith in his fellow countrymen to think that once the issue was raised they would not be content to lie down and allow an irresponsible and unrepresentative body to hang up the decisions of Parliament. He wanted, however, to avert the issue and to have some much needed social legislation adopted. He hoped Gentlemen above the gangway would allow Scottish Members to exercise the right that they thought they had of managing their own business in their own way, interpreting better than others possibly could the feelings, interests, and aspirations of the people of Scotland.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he held an opposite view to that of the right hon. Gentleman opposite with regard to the Scottish Grand Committee. He held it to be the only way they could manage their business short of having separate Parliaments for separate parts of the Kingdom. The system had not had a fair trial. He had already given his reasons for supporting the Resolution, but he would like to say a few words with reference to the assumption of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that because a certain number of days was given to a Bill in Grand Committee, therefore the Bill was thoroughly discussed. That was not so. If a Bill was passed without an excessive use of the closure, or without the use of the closure at all, as was the case with the Land Values Bill, it might certainly be taken that it was fully and fairly discussed. But where the closure had been moved fifty times, and where no concessions had been made, the presumption was that the objections raised to the Bill had been evaded rather than met, and that, he maintained, was the case with the Small Landholders Bill. They had had one most eloquent speech from the Lord-Advocate, to which he had listened with interest as an antiquarian; and that was the only speech to the point that he had listened to during the whole time the Bill was before the Grand Committee. It was an admirable speech. If they could have had a speech like that upon the introductiou of dual ownership, or the giving of an independent valuation, or the fixing for Scotland of a new standard of economic rent, or for the abolition of one Board of Agriculture without making any provision for another, the discussion would have been materially shortened. It was not the arguments used against the Bill which wasted time, but the fact that the Government did not produce a case for the Bill, because it was introduced practically without inquiry, and it was difficult for them to find reasons for it. It was because the Government had to avoid giving reasons for the Bill that the discussion was so indefinitely prolonged. It was said that a knot of English Members wasted time, but he did not think that was so. Some English Members might have been innocent of agriculture like a great number of his Scottish colleagues, but three or four English Members were extremely well informed in agriculture, and no one could say that their contributions to the discussion were without value. They were the best fitted of the Members to debate upon agricultural affairs. The Chancellor of the Exchequer no doubt thought a great many of the points discussed were of very little significance, but they were of immense significance. The first clause which they had taken five or six days in discussing was destructive of the whole agricultural system in Scotland. Under the Bill no landlord in his senses would have continued to furnish equipment for farms as at present. That was what the Chancellor of the Exchequer called a method. All the vital principles underlying the Bill were described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as so many methods between which they had to choose in preferring the English or the Scottish Bill, but they were vital, and that was the reason why the debates were prolonged. The cost of the establishment under the Bill was a thing they had never had a discussion on yet, and on which he did not suppose they ever would. He protested against the idea that time was wasted in the Committee upstairs, and he did that in order to urge that it must not be assumed in defending the Small Landholders Bill that it was adequately discussed there, because he was perfectly clear that it was not.

Mr. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) said the hon. Member for Leith Burghs had complained that the Small Landholders Bill had been mismanaged by the promoters. When he complained that there was no one but himself and one or two hon. Gentlemen opposite on the Committee who had a sufficient knowledge of agriculture to deal with the Bill, he would remind him that the greatest and most beneficial agricultural measure ever introduced into Scotland, the Crofters Act, was carried through the House by a lawyer who never knew farming and never owned an estate, the late Lord Kinross. The plain fact of the matter was that the hon. Member for Leith and those who agreed with him came to the Committee determined to obstruct and destroy the Bill—["Oh"]—because it was founded on a principle to which they had a rooted dislike. He admitted that that was fair political warfare. He understood, though he did not agree with the argument of the right hon. Member for South Dublin, that the Landholders Bill was not discussed sufficiently to enable Scotland to understand it; but what, then, became of the argument of the Leader of the Opposition that Scotland had been so instructed in this matter that it had actually made up its mind to have nothing to do with the Bill? Scotland had been instructed, for the debates in Committee were reported in the *Scotsman, Glasgow Herald, Dundee Advertiser*, and the Aberdeen papers. Many Members of both Houses of Parliament had addressed meetings in Scotland in the autumn; the Bill had been discussed in every Scottish newspaper; it was talked of in the market place and workshop to the exclusion of other political topics; and on occasion every large landowner had invited his tenants to dinner, and the reporter was called in so that the views of the landholders might be made known. Some landowners took the occasion for the first time to remit arrears of rent, on account of the bad season, of course, and they saw to it that it was advertised in the newspapers. He had never known Scotland so agitated and so earnest about any important measure. He agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that Scotland had made up its mind upon this question, but not in the direction which was claimed by the right hon. Gentleman, and he claimed to know the mind of Scotland a great deal better than some hon. Members opposite. It was not after all so difficult for Scotsmen to understand the opposition to this Bill, and especially the opposition offered by the Scottish landowners. In Scotland they had had for the last 25 years in the Crofters Act a working model of this very measure. Scotsmen knew thoroughly well what they were doing. The Scottish small landholder knew very well that when this Bill passed he would possess security in his holdings, and that was enough for him. The agricultural labourer knew that he was a prospective small holder and would have a chance which he never had before, and that was enough for him. These were the classes who were longing for the Bill. Of course they did not hear them making long speeches, and it was necessary to go amongst them to find out their views, because they were not reported in the newspaper. He urged hon. Members not to delay this Scottish Small Landholders Bill unduly, because the people of Scotland were most anxious that it should pass into law. He would remind the House that the Second Reading was carried by 491 to 239; so that the principle of the measure had been affirmed by the House and thoroughly discussed. With regard to the other Bill, no one had said that it had not been sufficiently discussed, the objection raised being mainly that it was a complicated measure. To his mind it was a short measure and to those who had studied it the Bill was simple enough. It had been discussed not only in this House but in the country for a good many years, and it was supported by a majority of the municipalities in Scotland and England. A Committee sat for eighteen months upstairs considering the matter and they had made their recommendations. In conclusion he urged hon. Members on both sides of the House to give their support to the Resolution.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) said he objected to some of the observations which had been made by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Of course it was very convenient to argue that upon this question Scotland had made up its mind. The point he had to consider was that this was a British House of Parliament and that the Resolution had not simply to be passed by Scotsmen alone. To pass measures in that way they would have to wait until Home Rule for Scotland, as well as for Ireland, was passed. Until that time arrived he maintained that English Members had a perfect right to discuss all measures which came before the House of Commons, no matter whether they were Scottish or English Bills. The hon. Member for Glasgow had objected strongly to what he called the misuse of the time of the Committee. Two hon. Members had also stated that full reports of the proceedings in Committee upstairs had appeared in the Scottish newspapers. He was one of those who took part in those discussions, and he was one of those who liked to see his speeches in print. He had looked at the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Scotsman*, but he had never seen a single word of his reported. The Scottish Members were reported, but the reports given to English Members were few and brief. If they were to judge of the proceedings in the Standing Committee by the reports in Scottish papers, they would find that English Members occupied exceedingly little time. He challenged the hon. Member to prove that any English Member on the Opposition side of the House occupied undue time in the Committee. The hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow had said that Scotsmen could take care of themselves, and that if they were left alone they would arrange their affairs. He contended that the English Members of the Committee were very useful, and that they fulfilled their old function of keeping the peace in Scotland. On more than one occasion they saved the Government from being defeated by their own followers. The hon. Member for Ross and Cromarty brought forward a number of Amendments which would have been carried against the Government but for the support of the English members of the Committee. He thought the Government were most ungrateful. The remark that hon. Members above the gangway on the Opposition side of the House were always opposed to freedom was hardly worthy of the hon. Member who made it. What they wanted was freedom of discussion. The hon. Member well knew that more than half the Bill was closured without any discussion at all. The hon. Member for the Leith Burghs had pointed out that the reason why the closure was so frequently moved was that those representing the Government were unable to give an answer to the questions which were asked. They would not give sufficient information to the Members of the Committee. That was why the proceedings took so long. When there was a difficult point which ought to be explained, the discussion was closured. The Solicitor-General for Scotland spoke half a dozen times in Committee, and the Lord Advocate only made one speech which had much bearing on the Bill. He himself had asked for information, and it had been refused. He supposed the hon. Member went on the principle—

Gin a body ask a body,
Need a body tell.

He asked the learned Solicitor General a question and was told it would be answered when they came to Clause 14. The Clause was closured, and when it was brought up in the House it was closured again. The charges brought forward by the hon. Member for the Blackfriars division were actually grotesque. They had been told of a famous meeting at Perth. What had they to do in that House with the meeting at Perth? What had the House to do with landlords' dinners? These Bills should be discussed on their merits. The Government could not speak for themselves last year upstairs on the Small Landolders Bill, and now the Bill was brought forward in the same form. The hon. Member had pointed out that English Members did not know much about Scottish agriculture. He claimed to know something of Scottish agriculture. He lived within sight of Scotland, in Northumberland, where agriculture was the same as in Roxburgh and Berwickshire. It was grotesque to say that English Members did not know. It had been said that the Crofters Act of twenty-one years ago, which was passed by a lawyer, had been most successful, and that it ought to be applied to the lowlands. The hon. Member was not satisfied with the Report of the Douglas Commission.

MR. A. DEWAR: The Chairman of the Commission was a moral philosopher.

MR. LAMBTON said that in regard to agriculture he would just as soon have the opinion of a moral philosopher as that of a lawyer. The moral philosopher at the head of the Commission had the assistance of five other Commissioners who were not moral philosophers. They were acquainted with agriculture in every branch, and they reported on the system of crofter legislation which the hon. Member was so proud of. They proved that crofting conditions were all very well in crofting districts, but that they would not apply to the lowlands. No reply had ever been given to that contention. To talk of applying the Crofters Acts to Berwickshire and Roxburghshire was the greatest nonsense in the world. The Douglas Commission proved that crofters could not live without other occupation. The charges which had been brought against English Members with respect to their action in the Standing Committee with relation to the Small Landholders Bill were unjustified, and that would have appeared from a full report of the proceedings if such had been available. He understood from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Second Reading of the Bill would be passed in four hours on Tuesday next. That would be a most unjustifiable and arbitrary proceeding, and it would not redound to the credit of the Government.

*SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire) said that hon. Members on the other side of the House had gone into the great constitutional questions raised by the debate. He would like to state some of his reminiscences of what happened during the twenty-two sittings of the Scottish Grand Committee when the Small Landholders Bill was before it. He was present at all but one of the sittings, and the speeches of the English Members were listened to by the Scottish Members with that patience which was one of their national characteristics. Many of those speeches were of the nature of Second Reading speeches. It seemed to him that hon. Members representing agricultural counties in Scotland had to put considerable restraint on their desire to speak in order to enable hon. Members for England to express their views. While Members representing Scottish constituencies were occasionally firing stray shots in skirmishing order, they were attacked on all sides, bombarded, and enfiladed not only by Members of the regular Opposition but by the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs and others who were opposed to the Bill. The supporters of the Bill in the Committee could not be charged with any undue haste. As to the mind of Scotland regarding the Bill, he attached great weight to the meeting at Perth which was attended by about 600 delegates from all parts of the country. The resolution passed by that meeting in favour of the creation of small holdings was a sufficient answer to the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs who said that there was no demand whatever for small holdings. Having discussed this matter for six or seven years with people in Roxburghshire, especially with the farm servants, whose connection with the land was simply that of wage-earners, he could state very distinctly that there was a great demand for small holdings in the Lowlands. The proceedings of the Grand Committee were watched with the keenest interest, and many people came from Roxburghshire and elsewhere in Scotland to listen to the discussions. He thought he had a right to say that the people of Scotland were supremely interested in this matter.

SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) hoped an English Member would be permitted to say a few words, because this was a question which could not be confined to the northern part of the United Kingdom. The proposal in the Small Landholders Bill was to adopt in Scotland a scheme of land tenure which the Government were entirely abolishing in Ireland. If that was the case, it was a reason why the House of Commons should be very careful in allowing such a Bill to pass without criticism. He did not intend to offer any observations on the Bill itself which had been so fully discussed already. He rather looked with favour and not with suspicion on Bills affecting Scotland, which were approved by hon. Members for Scotland. He remembered taking part in the discussions on a Scottish Police Bill in Committee. The work of that Committee was perfectly satisfactory to the House, and although it was corrected in a few details on the Report stage the Bill was practically passed as it had left the Committee, and it now stood part of the statute law of Scotland. He wished to make a passing reference to the Report presented at the end of last session by the hon. Member for Lanark on the Standing Committee. The figures given in that Report amply justified the criticisms which some hon. Members had ventured to pass on the Standing

Committees. Where a Bill was non-contentious that tribunal was eminently fitted to perform its work. True, there was sometimes a difficulty in forming a quorum and afterwards of securing the attendance of a quorum during the whole of the sitting. Nevertheless, where a Bill was non-contentious the Committee was equal to the occasion and performed its duties in a satisfactory manner. But where they had a contentious Bill, such as the Small Landholders Bill, the same conditions did not obtain. There were long sittings, the closure was applied, and the proceedings were not regarded as satisfactory. It seemed to him that bringing in the two Scottish Bills on the present occasion was very much the same as carrying forward Bills from one session to another. The procedure was so similar, and would be so quick, that the House would have no opportunity of proper discussion. For his part he could feel no security that Bills so discussed really did represent the latest condition of the Scottish mind. They knew to their pleasure the character of the Scottish intellect, its fervidness, agility, and fertility, and, therefore, he could not suppose that during the last autumn when, according to the observations made by more than one speaker, the attention of Scotland was concentrated on this Bill, Scottish ingenuity and intelligence had no further proposals to make in regard to it, and that the Scottish people had no desire for its modification, or had discovered no means for its improvement. All opportunity, however, of modifying or amending the Bill would be lost by the course of policy which the Government were now proposing to adopt. There was one circumstance in connection with the proposal now before the House to which attention ought to be called. It was to be observed, although no notice had been taken of that circumstance in the debate, that when the Government had only a demand on one half of an evening, that was to be regarded as an "allotted day." That was an additional curtailment of the time of the House for discussion of the Small Landholders Bill next Tuesday. That could not be looked upon as in any degree a proper mode of conducting the business of the House. He thought that the Amendment of his hon. friend would lead to some information being given on the part of the Government as to the procedure which they intended to submit hereafter for the consideration of the House. Reference was made in a recent debate to a suggestion that there should be procedure first of all by Resolution. The Resolution dealing with the general outline or principle of the Bill, having been adopted, the Bill might be then introduced and proceeded with, and time saved. In his own experience last century the House of Commons had to deal with one of the most difficult problems ever submitted to Parliament — the duty of passing a Bill relating to India. There were great difficulties to which some reference was made in the "Letters of Queen Victoria." The Government of that day escaped out of the difficulties by submitting a series of Resolutions—he forgot how many—and when they considered that these had been sufficiently discussed, the Bill was introduced and passed, comparatively without difficulty. The points of controversy had been decided in the course of the debates on the Resolutions. He recommended the example of those days to the sympathetic consideration of the Government. If the House would allow him, he desired, with every respect, to utter a few words of caution. Were they quite sure that they were not too much under the influence of party loyalty? He would be the last person to complain of that; but were they quite sure that they were not passing unconsciously and insensibly to the surrender of those great rights and privileges of the House of Commons? Surely it was a dangerous thing that their debates should be so curtailed. It was a dangerous thing in itself, but it was far more dangerous when they found debate of Bill after Bill, session after session, curtailed. There was an increase of this curtailment, and a corresponding diminution of the liberties of the House of Commons. He had ventured on more than one occasion to express his grea regret at the increased power of the Executive in this Parliament. He believed that it was a dangerous growth, and might bring about grave consequences; and instead of being continued as now, it ought to be arrested. Unless some change took place, the House would become a mere machine for the registration of the fiat and decrees of the Government of the day. He did not believe that this was in any degree a party question. It was a Parliamentary question, a national question, an Imperial question; and if the House parted with its privileges he was certain that it would cease to command the confidence of the people of the country. He was sure that its efficiency as a great Parliamentary machine and agency would be terribly, almost fundamentally, impaired.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) agreed with what his hon. friend had said concerning the restriction of the liberties of the House. If the Government representing the Party to which he belonged brought in a Resolution like that moved by the Prime Minister, he declared deliberately that he would criticise the action of that Government and would oppose it. To pass Resolutions such as that now under consideration for curtailing discussions in the House in future, might be advantageous to the Government, in order that they might get credit from their supporters for securing the passage of an individual Bill, so that it would look as if more work was being done. But there was something more important than work being done. Once interfere with its fundamental rights, as his hon. friend had pointed out, and they drew upon the House itself trouble, which must eventually mean disaster. Much had been made that afternoon of twenty-two days discussion on the Small Landholders Bill upstairs, but the fact that there were twenty-two days discussion was to his mind an argument that there should be forty-two. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, for instance, said the Land Values Bill passed without the closure; but why did it pass without it? It did not receive the same opposition, because there was not the same fundamental objection to it that there was to the Small Landholders Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that on the first clause of that Bill six days were occupied. That was a very serious thing, and it was a matter which the Government ought to recognise as representing a strength of feeling, that should have compelled them to reconsider the introduction of the Bill itself, and when upstairs in the Standing Committee six days were taken to discuss this Clause as introduced, it proved that to have sent that Bill to a Standing Committee at all was really an infringement of the free right of debate. His hon. friend who moved the Amendment said that surgeons grew to like the use of the knife, and it became a dangerous habit with them. One unfortunate thing was that the right hon. Gentlemen opposite did not apply the knife to themselves. The Government reaped an advantage for the moment from the course they were pursuing, but there would come a time when the very precedents which they had been setting would almost necessarily be followed by succeeding Governments, and he did not trust a Conservative or Unionist Government any more than he trusted a Liberal Government in this respect. He thought the temptation of every Government was to get its business done at almost any cost, and in permitting the Government now in power to pass these Resolutions, the House was only laying up for itself a store of trouble in the future. When a Unionist Government was in power and, wanting to gets its work done, applied a similar Resolution to this, bringing the closure into force, would not the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway object, and very strongly, to the autocratic methods, as they would call them, of the Government of that time? They in that part of the House objected to Resolutions of this sort because they represented an increase of autocratic power on the part of the Executive. It was assumed in regard to these Bills that all the discussions had been completed; because nobody could say that there could be any discussion under the rules proposed. But was it certain that discussion was completed? Several months had passed since these Bills were brought in before; the country had had time to consider them, the representatives of the people had had time to consider them; the Scottish Members had been to their constituencies, and the English Members had had time to read the debates. Would anyone suggest that when these two Bills came up again the discussion which had occurred would be adequate to the occasion? He did not think so. It had been pointed out by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House that questions of principle were not discussed at all in the Standing Committees, the questions most serious to the welfare of the landed interests of Scotland were completely passed over, and by the falling of the closure fifty nine times these grave questions were consigned to the oblivion which the Government had prepared for them. As he had said, the precedent was a dangerous one. The Government by it would choke discussion, and he ventured to say they would do so only for party purposes. It was a party purpose, and that was the cruel part of it. In order to see these Bills through at any cost the Government had proposed this Resolution, and if they received the support of the vast majority of the Liberal Members of the House they would once more demonstrate the helplessness of the minority, and once more show that their rights must be sacrificed. It was much better to allow over discussion than curtail discussion. He had been eight years in the House and he did not believe that on any Bill of importance there had been too much debate. It was only by constant discussion, by constant threshing out of clauses that they got at the bottom of the weakness of each individual clause, and judged its strength. There came to his mind a Bill which was passed, almost with a consensus of opinion and support from all quarters of the House. He referred to the Workmen's Compensation Bill, and he had always believed that that measure went through the House too quickly. He did not, moreover, believe that there was a single Member who had watched the working of that Bill, since it became law, who was not convinced that if it were again discussed, each clause would receive graver attention than it did. He thought there was the greatest danger, because feeling was in favour of its principle, in allowing a Bill to pass without fighting every clause of it, in order to find out what the meaning of it was, and what its effect would be. The Workmen's Compensation Bill was only one of a number to which he could refer, if there were time, and he opposed this Resolution because it would destroy adequate discussion. Even if the House had made up its mind upon these Bills, he believed that the Resolution was dangerous in principle and tyrannous in practice. The House of Commons was a body that had extravagantly generous instincts, and liked, when it was possible, to unite on the principle of a measure; indeed it was constantly shown to the Treasury Bench how eager the Opposition was to be generous when opportunity occurred. The danger was, when there was a good feeling concerning a Bill or measure, to allow that Bill to have a freedom of movement to which the whole history of the House was opposed, and the business of the House and the business of its Committees was to tear every Bill in pieces in order that when it became law it should offer no opportunities to the members of the legal profession to tear it to pieces. It would be far better to carry over Bills and deal with over discussion when it occurred than to pursue the present course. The fault he found was that the Prime Minister and those who sat on the Treasury Bench prepared for over discussion. They assumed that the Opposition would not properly, in an orderly fashion, and with a due sense of responsibility for the time they occupied, deal with these Bills, and they had acted in a most ungenerous and unmanly fashion. It was almost an insult to the House to say to Members of the Opposition that if these Bills were brought in they would not treat them fairly, but would over discuss them. If the Government were going to attempt to carry out the principle that before a Bill was brought in they would assign a time to it, what guarantee had the House in the future for liberty of speech and for due and proper discussion? Slowly and steadily the Government during its two years of office had taken from the House discussion in Committee, and in the second year they deliberately took from a Committee of the Whole House the right of discussion of Bills which ought to have been discussed in the Whole House. He opposed entirely the idea that because the Bill was a Scottish measure it should be relegated to Scotsmen. They had heard the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Bill in question would have passed in half the time if English Members had not been on the Committee. What an extraordinary statement from a right hon. Gentleman of his experience in the Parliament of this country! They might as well break the Union and devolve the business of the Legislature to separate Parliaments for Wales, Scotland, and Ireland at once, as say that questions which concerned Scotland should only be dealt with by Scotsmen, and that they only should be allowed to sit on the Standing Committee and be responsible for passing a Bill through it. Such a proposition was wrong in principle and wrong in practice. There should be in the House the widest kind of criticism and discussion, and they were surely not going to descend to that parochialism, of a cramping and injurious kind, which relegated to certain sections of the House certain questions which belonged to the future and welfare of the United Kingdom. He strongly protested that the arguments which had been used in defence of the carrying of the Small Landholders Bill were unsound, unfair, and unwise, and he objected to the localising of the discussions upon certain portions of the Kingdom. The intentions of the Government he agreed were honourable, and they desired to facilitate business legitimately. He would, however, like hon. Members to think for a moment of the methods adopted for cramping, crushing, and stifling legitimate discussion in their desire to advance business legitimately. The course they had adopted was not the basis upon which Liberal Governments in the past had gone to work. The Parliamentary records of the House showed that Liberal Governments in the days of Mr. Gladstone kept up a very high standard of their duties and responsibilities on the one hand, and the opportunities and liberties of hon. Members upon the other. He regretted that he could not trust right hon. Gentlemen opposite upon this question. He did not think they ought to be led into temptation, and they were at present leading themselves and their followers into temptation. Human nature was much the same the world over, and no Cabinet was exempt from it. The Government had been casuistic in regard to this Bill, and they had cited the merits of the particular case in their own defence. The Government had no right to take any one Bill as an illustration of the value of a principle which they were trying to establish. If it was only one case of opportunism one would perhaps be inclined to let it go, but it was not so. What was being done now would be taken as a precedent to be followed in the future, and the same principle would be applied to other Bills. The proposal was wrong altogether. The funnel of legislation was choked in this House, and there was far more business to do than there was twenty years ago, although the machinery for doing it was very little better. Their responsibilities had increased, but they would not cure the choking up of the funnel by boring holes in it, and that was exactly what they were doing now. They were actually attempting to cure the evil by injuring the machinery. There was a fundamental defect in the Resolution which he hoped the House would realise. They would not be wise in attempting to facilitate business at the expense of the rights of Members and the liberties of the representatives of the people, or by choking off discussion in the House of Commons. A revolt against such procedure would ultimately come from both sides of the House. There was scarcely an hon. Member in the last Parliament who did not lift his voice against the guillotine when it was applied by the late Government. He thought this Government or any future Government would find the safest and most liberal course the best. Nothing was to be gained by saying to men who had a due sense of their responsibility, "We will not let you talk too long upon this question." They would have to proceed upon entirely different lines. He contended that the Resolution was fraught with great danger to the freedom of debate in the House, and the future would justify the action of those who were now raising their voices against it. Never before in the history of the House of Commons had any Government done what this Government was now proposing; that was, to bring in a Resolution applying the closure to measures before they had been discussed, and defining the limits under which the representatives of the people should express their views upon what were really national questions. He believed that if the House properly considered the question at issue and voted according to its conscience, the Resolution would be sent to the limbo of undesirable legislative acts. That was the only hope which could animate one's breast in the face of a Ministerial Party so intent upon having their own way at any cost.

*SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in replying to the speech of the hon. Member for Sevenoaks, had treated in a light-hearted vein the misgivings which animated the Opposition with regard to the successive encroachments and inroads upon freedom of debate, which had been made by His Majesty's Government during the short period they had been in power, and which had now culminated in this series of Resolutions to which the Amendment of his hon. friend was directed. Some of the most cherished objects of a constitutionally governed people, viz., the unrestricted liberty of debate and the unhampered observance of the rights of minorities, were at stake, and this in connection with two Bills of first class importance introducing and involving a novel principle of a wide and far-reaching character. What was it that the House was asked to deal with in this summary fashion? One of the Bills was the Scottish Small Landholders Bill, the main principles and not the less important details of which had been remitted to a Committee upstairs. With all due respect he wished to state that by taking that course the measure had been wholly removed from the purview of that consideration which alone it could receive by a full and comprehensive discussion before a Committee of the Whole House. When this session was only a few days old the House was asked—in fact it was bidden by the Government, with a pistol aimed at its head—to pass within the short span of an allotted day Bills of the utmost importance involving vital principles. In one day the House was expected to pass the financial stage of the Resolution, the Report stage and the Third Reading of an important measure. Not satisfied with making this great demand upon the patience and energy of this House, so voracious seemed to be the appetite of His Majesty's Government for hasty legislation, that they were introducing by a side wind the principle of carrying measures from one session to another. At the present moment he was not concerned to discuss the expediency or desirability of adopting that principle, but he wished to point out that it was a principle against which, under the doughty championship of political leaders such as Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt, Governments in the past had set their faces against like flint. If His Majesty's Government desired to benefit from the advantages which were likely to accrue from this new principle of carrying over measures, the proper and fairest way for the House of Commons was to bring forward a matured plan to be submitted for the reasoned and considered judgment of Parliament. When by the changes of political strife hon. Members came to occupy a position of less responsibility and greater freedom they would find that they had created by this Resolution a Frankenstein monster, the inconvenient antics of which they would have put themselves out of court to denounce. The hon. Member below the gangway, with the eloquence and vigour usually associated with his utterances, had given his benediction on behalf of the Labour Party to these Resolutions.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Hear, hear!

*SIR EDWARD SASSOON said he noticed that the hon. Member for Stoke endorsed that view. Upon what grounds were they supporting these Resolutions? On the ground that they would injure the position of another place.

MR. JOHN WARD: Business.

*SIR EDWARD SASSOON said hon. Members from Ireland were also chuckling at this treatment of the Parliamentary machine at the bidding of the Liberal Party. Everything that was likely to conduce to the impotence of the Second Chamber was sure to be welcomed by hon. Members below the gangway, who welcomed anything which was likely to lead in the direction of Home Rule. He submitted to the two important sections of the House which he had alluded to that in acceding to the demand made by the Government they were taking rather short views. If the experience of the past was any guide, the effect of the establishment of a Land Court in Scotland apart from the usual tribunal of the realm and the establishment of fixity of tenure and fair rents on the basis of dual ownership was infallibly bound to lead to that very deadlock with which they were now confronted in Ireland. He ventured to predict that some day a future Government would have to come down to the House of Commons and do what his right hon. friend the Member for Dover had to do in 1902—that was, ask for the credit of the Imperial Exchequer, not for 120 million pounds, but for something nearer 700 or 800 million pounds in order to undo the mischief, the germs of which, the Government were now sedulously planting. What evidence was there that the people of Scotland desired to have these Bills passed? Their agricultural conditions were exactly similar to that of their competitors on the other side of the Tweed, and they did not require dissimilar treatment. The Opposition never had any desire to obstruct sane and sober legislation, and in support of that contention he would mention the fact that the English Land Bill was passed last year without the closure being imposed. As regarded the alleged enthusiasm which had been excited in the breasts of Scotsmen by these measures, His Majesty's Government had already been told by an eminent agricultural expert, who sat on the benches opposite, what he thought of the Small Landholders Bill. The Leader of the Opposition had had good opportunities of ascertaining the views and aspirations of the people of Scotland, and he had assured the House that there was no demand for the Small Landholders Bill in Scotland. Then, again, Lord Rosebery had riddled the measure through and through in the Upper Chamber. It was this under-fed and stunted bantling that the Government were desirous of passing without discussion. With regard to the Land Values Bill, they all knew that that measure had had practically no discussion in the House. The Resolution showed that His Majesty's Government were rather infected with a desire for resorting to the extra-constitutional methods which seemed so dear to the heart of the President of the Board of Education. In conclusion, he said the Opposition were determined to give these Resolutions and their underlying idea their most strenuous and uncompromising resistance, and he would have great pleasure in voting for this Amendment.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said that those who sat on the Labour Benches were going to support the Resolution because they wanted to see some work done in the House of Commons. They had heard a lot of arguments about stifling discussion, and people outside were asked to believe such statements. He ventured to dissent entirely from that view, for in his opinion there was too much opportunity given to the Opposition to prevent legislation. To come down night after night and see the benches of the House of Commons from 7 o'clock to 9.30 with probably only about twenty-five Members present, and then at 11 o'clock to hear hon. Members crying out "Gag, gag, gag," was to his mind something entirely wrong. If they really wanted to discuss these questions, why did they not attend in the House? What he had been impressed with in the speeches from both sides was that it did not seem to be a question of stifling discussion, but of preventing the Opposition from stopping the Party in power from carrying out legislation. He asserted that the object of the Opposition was to prevent the Government from carrying legislation, in order that they would be unable to go to the country and state that they had done certain things. He remembered the discussion in the House in regard to the land question, and they all viewed with regret that the land of the country was going out of cultivation. When discussing the Land Bills those opposed did not discuss the problem of the cultivation of land in the interests of the people, but principally the rights of the landlords in regard to the preservation of game. During those discussions it was not the people's rights but the rights of the landlords which the House was asked to think about. He contended that the Bills dealt with in this Resolution had been fully discussed, and in giving their support to the Government he thought they were doing that which was right and were not restricting the liberties of anybody in the House so far as the consideration and discussion of those measures was concerned. He denied that the Labour Party by their action upon this question were animated by any desire to provoke a conflict with the House of Lords.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 332; Noes, 83. (Division List No. 9.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton

Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Balrow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, Sir J Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Abbleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley Rt. Hon. John
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)

Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col.Ivor(S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price, RobertJohn(Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford, E.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thmoas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpton
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson, SirGScott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton-und.-Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.
Thomas, SirA. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W.Dudley(Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, RtHn.SirAlex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Capt.Hn.G(Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C.W
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, RtHn.J.A(Worc.
Clark, George Smith(Belfast,N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, CharlesCurtis(Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence(Kent,Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Lord Arthur (West Down)
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
King, SirHenrySeymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederck Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col. A.R
Long, Col. Charles W.(Evesham
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin, S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, JohnFrederickPeel
Roberts, S.(Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos.Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith,F.E.(Liverpool, Walton)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G(Oxf'dUniv.
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A.Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Foster.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) moved an Amendment to provide that the various stages of the Bills should be proceeded with "in the manner prescribed by a Select Committee." He said that the result of that would be to leave the settlement of the time to be occupied, not to the Government, but to an independent tribunal of this House. He had good reason to believe that at any other time his Amendment would be accepted by the Government, because both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said in the past that they did not approve of the Government coming down and settling the time to be given to any particular Bill. But now it was said that this Motion was of a special character, because its object was to enable these Bills to be sent to the House of Lords at such a time as would give that House a more reasonable time to discuss and decide on them than was given last year. But if that was the only object why should not the Bills be introduced in the House of Lords? To that Question he ventured to think no Answer could be given. But if the course was not acceptable to the Government he could not see why they allotted any days at all. Why should not they follow a little further the precedent which they had set in this Motion? They said "the Committee on the financial resolutions shall be deemed to be set up." Why should they not go a little further and say "The Bills shall be deemed to have been passed through all their stages"? If the only object of the Motion was to get the Bills before the other House, he could not see why the Government gave this farcical time for their discussion. If the Scottish Small Landowners Bill required discussion at all, nobody would pretend to say that it would be adequately discussed in two days. As he understood, the Labour Party thought it ought not to be discussed; that it was discussed sufficiently last year, both in the House and in the country. But if it was thought it required to be discussed, it was grotesque and farcical to give only two days to the discussion. It was said it was difficult to induce the electors to understand or to take an interest in a debate upon the privileges of the House, or to take any interest in its internal arrangements. But that made it all the more necessary for Members of the House to take adequate precautions to see that its liberties were preserved. How long were they to go on submitting to these guillotine Resolutions, always deplored by the Minister proposing them, to whatever Party he belonged, and always proposed again the next time he desired to pass a measure? Unless the unofficial Members of the House found the courage to rebel against the official Members these things would go on time after time, always with promises that at some distant period definite arrangements for the business of the House would be set up. He hoped that one of these Committees would be set up, and that it would not be left to the *ipse dixit* of the Government of the day; but that would never be fulfilled until they reasserted the liberties of the House, until they impressed on the Government that these perpetual acts of attainder against the liberties of the House were really resented by the House, and until they enforced their opinions by their votes in the lobby. He made this appeal because in his judgment the danger of tyranny was not less under a democratic form of government than under any other. On the contrary, it was greater. Under other forms of government they had an appeal to another and greater power than the Government, namely, the power of the people who would resist in the last resource if the Government acted tyrannically; but under a democratic government that resource was removed. Once they had persuaded the majority to support their view, however tyrannical to the minority and however unacceptable it might be, there was no appeal at all. The only resource they had to prevent the democracy from working out the worst tyranny in the world was for those who administered the democracy, who guided it, and who represented it in this House, to take care that they would never give their assent to an act that was really tyrannical. The Amendment did not destroy the

Prime Minister's Resolution, but merely proposed to refer it to an impartial Committee to see whether it was really just and fair to all parties in the House.

MR. BOWLES (Norwood) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, to leave out from the second word 'the' to the end of line 22, and to insert the words 'manner prescribed by a Select Committee.'"—(*Lord Robert Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. ASQUITH assured the noble Lord that he supported the main Motion without any crocodile's tears, with dry eyes, with a clear conscience, and with no twinge of remorse. If these Bills were now being introduced for the first time the periods assigned for their various stages would be wholly inadequate. That, however, was not the case, for they were dealing with one specific case, which could not legitimately form a precedent if hereafter proposals were made with reference to legislation introduced for the first time. Why should they refer to a Select Committee—which was more or less a microcosm of the House, and which would have the same vice of partiality as they in the House suffered from—the duty of determining how many days the House should give to these Bills when the House was quite capable of determining the matter there and then for themselves? There could be only one answer—delay. The Amendment was dilatory, and it did not go to the real merits of the question, and he asked the House therefore to adhere to the original Motion.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 332; Noes, 85. (Division List No. 10.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hon Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, C. H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.

Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallett, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Holland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monmth
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir John Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters

Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—
Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, RtHn. Sir Alex F.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, RtHn. A.J. (City Lond.)
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon. Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, RtHn. J.A. (Worc
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clark, George Smith (Belfast, N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Darlymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Lord Arthur (West Down)
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Keswick, William
King, Sir HenrySeymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A.R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nield, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F.E. (Liverpool, Walton
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—
Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Frederick Banbury.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes, 331; Noes, 84. (Division List No. 11.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hon HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm.J. (.SPancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.

Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazelton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M (Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, SirD. Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal, E.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal (TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor,James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps,Col. Ivor (S'th'mpton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh,Central
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson,Rt.Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott (Bradf'd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel,Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley,Hn.A. (Lyulph (Ches.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)

Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wison, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn. Sir Alex. F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City, Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. A (Worc.
Clark, George Smith (Belfast, N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Lord Arthur (West Down)
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Neild, Herbert
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Viscount Valentia and Mr. Forster.

Ordered, That in the case of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill and the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, the Committee on the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill shall be deemed to have been set up as required by the Standing Orders of the House, and the Second Reading, Committee stage, and Report stage of the Bill (including the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto) and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—(a) The Committee stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating to the Bill, and the Second Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the first allotted day; and the Bill shall, when it has been read a second time, stand committed to a Committee of the Whole House without Question put; (b) The Report stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) and the Committee stage of the Bill, and, if the Bill is not amended in Committee, the Report of the Bill to the House, and the Third Reading of the Bill, shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the second allotted day, and on the conclusion of the consideration of the Bill in Committee the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put; (c) If the Bill is amended in Committee, the Report stage and the Third Reading of the Bill shall be proceeded with and brought to a conclusion on the third allotted day. After this Order comes into operation, any day (other than Friday) shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day, or on which any stage of the Financial Resolution (if any) relating thereto is put down as first Order of the day followed by the Bill. On any allotted day on which proceedings on any business allotted to that day are to be brought to a conclusion, the Speaker or Chairman shall at 10.30 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has precedence after 8.15 p.m., and at 7.45 p.m. if the day is one on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m. (if those proceedings have not already been brought to a conclusion,) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other amendments, and on any question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Proceedings to which this order relates shall not on any day, on which any proceedings or business are to be brought to a conclusion under this order, be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the sitting of the House. In the case of an allotted day being a day on which Government business has not precedence after 8.15 p.m., the time at which the proceedings or business is to be brought to a conclusion, are so brought to a conclusion shall, if that time is later than a quarter past eight, be substituted, for the purposes of Standing Orders relating to the precedence of business at different sittings and to the time for taking Private Business, for 8.15 p.m. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this order shall—(*a*) prevent any business which under this order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate a day being allotted to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be concluded on the allotted day has been disposed of.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

THE IMPRISONED WOMAN SUFFRAGISTS.

Sir WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith) said he wished to ask the Home Secretary a question, of which he had given private notice, or, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, anyone representing the Government, whether it was the fact that that afternoon Mrs. Pankhurst was arrested at Caxton Hall on her return from the South Leeds election, and, if so, by whose orders.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked why the suffragist ladies who were sent to prison as political offenders were not as well treated as men when they were imprisoned as political offenders.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) desired to know why the Home Secretary, who was specially informed half an hour ago that these questions would be asked, was not in his place. He also asked whether the ladies now in prison were being treated as first class misdemeanants or whether they were being treated more harshly than the hon. Member for North Westmeath (Mr. Ginnell).

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.), who entered the House at this moment: I understand that the hon. Member has asked me two questions. The first is with regard to several arrests this afternoon. As to that I have been in my room all the afternoon, and have not heard anything about the arrests referred to, but I will, of course, make inquiries. I am also asked with regard to the treatment of the women who have been committed to prison. I understand that the question is asked why they have been sent to the second division and not to the first.

MR. T. L. CORBETT said that perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would like the question asked again. It was whether the ladies now in prison were being treated as first-class misdemeanants or whether they were being treated more harshly than the hon. Member for North Westmeath. [AN HON. MEMBER: What does he know about Westmeath?]

MR. GLADSTONE: I have nothing whatever to do with the hon. Member for North Westmeath, whose case has been cited as an example of the treatment of a certain class of prisoners. I have no responsibility at all in that matter. It was the decision of the High Court in Ireland. With regard to the imprisonment of these women, I have to say that in my opinion it is a question for the discretion of the magistrate, and it is no part of the duty of the Home Secretary to interfere with that discretion when he considers it has been properly used upon the responsibility of magistrates or Judges in the public interest.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said he did not think the Home Secretary quite appreciated the question. They had now a set of political prisoners in England and a political prisoner in Ireland. The hon. Member for North Westmeath, who had been arrested and put into prison by the order of a Judge of the High Court of Ireland after hearing everything that the hon. Member had to say, was being treated as a first-class misdemeanant, while in this country certain ladies who, in consequence of their attempt to enforce what they considered to be their political rights, whether wisely or unwisely, discreetly or indiscreetly, were sent to prison and treated not as first-class, but as second-class misdemeanants. He did not say that the hon. member for Westmeath should be treated in the second class. But the contrast in the treatment of the two classes of prisoners was striking and required an explanation. Perhaps the Home Secretary would allow him to remind him that although the matter very materially rested in the discretion of the Court which sent a person to prison, it was quite possible for the Home Secretary, and he had often done it, to intervene in such cases and direct that prisoners sent to the second division should be treated in the first. It was done in the cases of Mr. Stead and the present President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Burns). At any rate it had been repeatedly done, and he thought the House was entitled to something more than the *ipse dixit* of the Home Secretary that he regarded the discretion of the police magistrate as having been properly exercised and that he would not interfere. He thought they were entitled to hear from the right hon. Gentleman some reason why these ladies should be treated in this way.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said the Irish party had always consistently supported the view that political prisoners should be treated as first-class misdemeanants. He did not see why the name of the hon. Member for North Westmeath should have been brought into the discussion at all. The hon. Member had been referred to as a political prisoner for the purposes of comparison. But that was not the case. The hon. Member was a contempt of court prisoner, and therefore was entitled to be treated, not as a first-class misdemeanant, but as a debtor for contempt of court and they had a very serious grievance about his case, but he did not think anything was gained by bringing in his name. Whenever these cases had been raised in this House, notably in regard to the Jameson raiders, a Member of the Government which the noble Lord supported, came and asked him if the Irish Members would oppose a proposal to treat them as first-class misdemeanants. Although they were opposed to the raiders, he said the

Nationalist party considered that they were political prisoners and ought to be treated as such. At any rate, he held that these ladies ought to be treated as political prisoners. He trusted that the next time an Irish political prisoner was committed to gaol the noble Lord and his friends would remember to apply the principles to which they had given expression.

LORD R. CECIL: I did not intervene in this debate on the ground of any principle. I merely wished to extract from the Home Secretary his reason for treating these women as second-class misdemeanants.

MR. DILLON: Then are we to understand that the noble Lord has no desire to see these ladies treated as political prisoners?

LORD R. CECIL: The hon. Member is anxious, if he can, to misrepresent what I said. [NATIONALIST cries of "Oh."] I have expressed no opinion in this matter. My only desire is that nobody should be punished more severely than they ought to be punished; and certainly I think that unless we are given some good reason for the treatment of these women in the second-class they ought to be placed in the first.

MR. DILLON said that Members of the House of Commons and the people outside it were entitled to know what the noble Lord's opinion was. Everybody knew what the offence of these ladies was, and the noble Lord could not shelter himself by saying he did not know. The Nationalist party held that these ladies were political prisoners, and said that men or women who founded themselves on political motives ought to be treated on a different footing from ordinary criminals. He was afraid the true interpretation of the noble Lord's attitude was that in England political prisoners, whether men or women, should be treated as first-class misdemeanants, and in Ireland as criminals.

MR. BRIGHT (Oldham) said he visited one of these prisoners at Holloway, a very worthy woman, however mistaken, and it was distressing to him to see one whom he had known for twenty years dressed in the degrading costume of prisoners in the second division. He thought such treatment was an unnecessary degradation of women who, whatever they might think of their actions, were actuated by the highest motives.

MR. A. C. CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) thought the condemnation of these ladies to the second class amounted to political tyranny.

MR. GLADSTONE: May I point out that these ladies can come out of prison whenever they like by giving sureties for their good behaviour. Surely they cannot have it both ways. Last year I did take certain action, and I made certain representations. The offences then committed were committed for the first time, and I hoped that the most lenient treatment would have a good effect. The lenient treatment, however, was used, because of the privileges it conferred in prison, simply for the purpose of encouraging the commission of further offences of the same kind. The magistrates in the exercise of their discretion, having experience in these matters for the last year and a half, came to the conclusion that action on their part was necessary in the interests of the public, and exercising that discretion fairly they have delivered their judgment. To my mind it is no part of the Home Secretary's duty to be constantly interfering with the discretion of the stipendiary magistrates, who are capable and experienced men doing their duty as well as they can in time of difficulty. I further say that if I were to interfere in this case, because of any opinion I myself might hold in regard to the offence, it would be a most serious discouragement to the stipendiary magistrates in doing what they think necessary in the discharge of their duty.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 14*th February*, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PETITIONS.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Bedale; Bradford; Churwell; Durham; Hull; Hornsea; Ingleton; Leek (eleven); Loddon; Longtown; Macclesfield; Newburn; Newton in Makerfield and Golborne; Newtown; Pontypridd; Pudsey (two); Senghenydd; South Cave; and Walton; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Ashford; Ashton under Lyne; Bedlington; Bradford (two); Corsham; Hornsea; Iver; Laycock; Lancaster (two); Melbourn; Melksham; Newcastle; Nottingham; Shildon; South Hetton (two); and Steeple Claydon (two); to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Warwick; and Leamington; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ARMY (APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT).

Copy presented, of the Appropriation Account for 1906–7, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon, and upon the Store Accounts of the Army [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 51.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES).

Annual Accounts presented, for the year 1906–7, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 52.]

ARMY (ORDNANCE FACTORIES) (APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT).

Copy presented, of Appropriation Account of the sums granted by Parliament for the expense of the Ordnance Factories, the cost of the productions of which have been charged to the Army, Navy, and Indian and Colonial Governments, etc., and the Statement of the Surpluses and Deficits upon the Grants for the year ended 31st March, 1907, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 53.]

ARMY (CLOTHING FACTORY).

Annual accounts presented, of the Royal Army Clothing Factory for the year 1906–7, with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 54.]

MILITARY WORKS ACTS, 1897, 1899, 1901 AND 1903.

Account presented, for the period ended 31st March, 1907, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 55.]

CHELSEA HOSPITAL (ARMY PRIZE MONEY AND LEGACY FUNDS).

Account presented, of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital (for Services other than those voted by Parliament) in the year ended 31st March, 1907, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 56.]

GREENWICH HOSPITAL AND TRAVERS' FOUNDATION.

Accounts presented, for the year ended 31st March, 1907, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 57.]

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 46. (Northern Nigeria, Report of the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1904–5, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 47 (Northern Nigeria, Report on the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1905–6, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report No. 48 (Nyasaland Protectorate, Report on the Results of the Mineral Survey, 1906–7, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACTS (SPECIAL EXCEPTION — SUBSTITUTION OF ANOTHER DAY FOR SATURDAY).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated 26th December, 1907, in pursuance of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as amended by The Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, revoking a previous Order and granting a Special Exception, authorising the occupiers of certain classes of Factories and Workshops to substitute some other day for Saturday as the weekly short day [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF STAFFORD).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Stafford, altering the Chase Town Polling District of the Lichfield Parliamentary Division and constituting a new Polling District, to be called the Chase Terrace Polling District of the Lichfield Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES) (MONTHLY STATEMENTS).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 12th February; *Dr. Macnamara*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 58.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Assistant Postman—Appointment to Vacancy.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will state the grounds on which Mr. W. S. Robertson, of Stirling, has been refused a position of assistant postman, bearing in mind the facts that he is an ex-telegraph messenger and has been employed as an auxiliary postman since 1903, and that the course of appointment to an established position of postman at Stirling is telegraph messenger, auxiliary, assistant, and then full time established postman.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Auxiliary postmen (as is clearly stated in the conditions of engagement) have no title to succeed to the position of assistant postman, though in particular cases they may have been permitted to do so. Under the arrangement which has been in force for a number of years, the present vacancy is due to an ex-soldier candidate.

Committee on Training of Telegraphists.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a Departmental Committee was appointed in 1902 to consider the system of training telegraphists that had been introduced contrary to the advice of telegraph administrators and the staff; whether he is aware that the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association proffered witnesses before this Committee, but the proposal was declined; whether the Report was issued in a confidential manner, and that it contains suggestions dealing adversely with the staff; and whether he can state the reason for withholding it from the consideration of the Select Committee on Post Office Wages, appointed in 1906 by this House.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) A Committee was appointed by one of my predecessors in 1902 to inquire into the working of the system of dual training, introduced in 1896 and endorsed by the Tweedmouth Committee in 1897. The Committee of 1902 had power to call such witnesses as they thought necessary, and they used their discretion in the matter. A Report was submitted to the Postmaster-General, but it was subsequently thought proper, before taking any definite action, to embody the same question in a reference of wider scope to another Committee in 1905. The present practice of the Post Office is based upon the Report of this later Committee. Evidence was given to the Select Committee on Post Office Servants as to the system of dual training and the reasons for which it had been abandoned, except in certain cases. There would have been no objection whatever on my part to furnishing the Select Committee with copies of the Reports of the two Departmental Committees if they had asked for them, but as the Reports in question referred to a system of training which had been abolished, which I had no intention of reviving, and which the staff did not wish revived, I do not think that they would have been of use to the Committee.

Post Office Supplementary Estimates.

MR. GIBBS (Bristol, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General when it is proposed to take the Supplementary Estimate for Post Office Services.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Probably on Thursday 20th.

Barnsley Education Accounts.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that, in his audit for the year ended 31st March, 1906, of the accounts under the Education Act, 1902, of the town council of the borough of Barnsley, the district auditor disallowed certain sums representing fees paid for the instruction of pupil teachers on the ground that such sums were improperly charged in the town council's accounts as expenditure in respect of elementary education; that an appeal was made to the Local Government Board against the auditor's decision, and the Local Government Board directed that the sums in question should be charged to the higher education accounts of the town council; that at the audit for the same year of the accounts of the West Riding County Council objection was taken by certain ratepayers in the West Riding to the payment of certain sums in respect of the instruction of pupil teachers being charged in the accounts as expenditure in respect of elementary education; and that the district auditor overruled the objection and decided to allow the payments as correct and legal; and whether, seeing that this ruling of the district auditor was diametrically opposed to the Board's decision in the Barnsley case and that on 21st March, 1907, an appeal was made to the Local Government Board against the decision of the auditor of the accounts of the West Riding County Council, such appeal has yet been dealt with by the Board, and, if not, when may the Board's decision thereon be expected.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The replies to the inquiries in the Question as to the decision of the district auditor in the Barnsley case, and the direction given by the Local Government Board on the appeal against that decision, are in the affirmative. The Board have received an appeal against the decision of another district auditor in allowing certain payments in the accounts of the West Riding County Council in relation to pupil teachers. The appeal raises some new points, which also occur in other cases now before the Department. These points are under consideration. I am not at present in a position to give my decision on the West Riding appeal; but I will do so as early as practicable.

Milk Supply.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the intention of the Government to introduce general legislation on the subject of the milk supply, he will move Instructions to the Committees on all Private Bills containing milk clauses that such clauses be struck out.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) It does not seem to me that the course proposed could well be adopted. I think that the best plan will be that the clauses should for the present be retained, on the understanding that they will be subject to reconsideration at a later stage in the event of a Public Bill being passed.

Port Sanitary Authorities and Diseased Meat.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that frozen meat from the Argentine has recently been seized in Hull affected with glandular tuberculosis, although accompanied by the official label of the Argentine Government certifying that the meat was sound; and what steps he proposes to take to safeguard the health of the community from such occurrences in future.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. Regulations under The Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act, 1907, are in preparation, and will, I hope, soon be issued, to confer additional powers on port sanitary authorities, and to enable them to deal suitably with any diseased meat which may be detected on arrival in this Country.

Army Reserve of Horses.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, having in view the increase of motor traffic and the consequent decrease of horses suitable as a reserve in case of war, he will consider the urgency of giving more encouragement to horse breeding in Great Britain and Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The whole question of improving the breed of horses suitable for military purposes is at present receiving the earnest attention of the Board of Agriculture and the Army Council, and I hope that the concerted energies of the two Departments will lead to some satisfactory issue.

Territorial Army—Estimated Annual Cost of a Field Battery.

VISCOUNT DALRYMPLE (Wigton): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the estimated annual cost of a battery of field artillery of the Territorial Army, excluding the pay of the officers and men, but including the cost of the permanent staff, horses, maintenance of sheds, stores, and equipment and ammunition; and what is the first cost of the guns, limbers, harness, wagons, sheds, &c.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The estimated annual cost of a field battery of the Territorial Force, excluding pay and rations but including the other items named in the Question, is, roughly, £2,000. The first cost of the guns, vehicles, harness, stores, and sheds is about £11,000. This includes £1,200 for conversion of guns and carriages into quick-firing as well as the original cost of the guns and carriages. The total future out-of-pocket expenditure of an initial character for each battery will be £1,600 if sheds are available, if not £750 per battery must be added.

Management of Parochial Charities.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is proposed that, in cases wherein the present parish area is not co-extensive with the old ecclesiastical area of the parish, and wherein, consequently, parish councils are deprived of the privilege granted by the Local Government Act of 1894, the Charity Commissioners shall alter and revise the scheme relating to the management and distribution of parochial charges.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) I have been asked by the President of the Local Government Board to answer this Question. In all cases where, owing to difficulties as to areas, a parish council is unable to replace churchwardens and overseers as trustees of a charity, or to exercise the powers of a vestry to appoint trustees or beneficiaries, it is the general practice of the Charity Commissioners to secure the representation of the parish council or the exercise of those powers by the establishment of a scheme. If, however, the charity has an income of £50 or upwards, and the trustees refuse to make an application, the Commissioners have no power to make a scheme, and in that case, though they are unable to provide for the exercise by the parish council of the powers referred to, they proceed to give the desired representation by means of an Order under sub-section 3 of section 14 of The Local Government Act, 1894.

Able-bodied Paupers.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Local Government Board what was the number of able-bodied male paupers of all ages receiving outdoor relief, single and married, respectively; and also the number of females, single and married, respectively, in January, 1907, and July, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) In the half-yearly returns for the 1st January and 1st July, only paupers of sixteen years and upwards are classified according to their personal condition. Moreover the July returns do not distinguish between married persons and others. The numbers of the classes referred to, so far as they are distinguished in the returns, were—

		1st January.	1st July.
Ordinary able-bodied males receiving outdoor relief	Married men relieved with wives	12,048	12,244
	Other men	4,283	
Ordinarily able-bodied females receiving outdoor relief	Wives relieved with their husbands	18,694	49,199
	Other women	41,018	

The above numbers include a large number of paupers who, while ordinarily able-bodied, received relief on account of sickness or temporary disability. The memorandum prefixed to the Parliamentary Return for the 1st January, 1907 (108, of 1907) explains the method of classification of male and female paupers, including the division between the able-bodied and the not able bodied.

Chorley Post Office.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will take steps to enlarge the structure of the central post office at Chorley, Lancashire, in order to remove the inconvenience caused by the frequent overcrowding arising from insufficient floor space.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am assured that the accommodation for the public at the Chorley post office is sufficient for ordinary requirements; but the exceptional demand for postal orders in connection with the "Limerick craze" has led to the public office being overcrowded in the evenings. Special steps have been taken to cope with this demand, which is not likely to be permanent.

Corporal Punishment.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will say for what offences a male juvenile offender is now liable to corporal punishment by order of the Court.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Boys under 16 convicted on indictment may be ordered by the Court to be whipped for a large number of offences under the Larceny Act, 1861, The Malicious Injuries to Property Act, 1861, and The Offences against the Person Act, 1861, and for offences under Section 4 of The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885; also for those offences (garotting, &c.) for which adults may be whipped, but of these boys are rarely, if ever, convicted. Boys under 14 may also be whipped by order of a court of summary jurisdiction on conviction of any indictable offence which is dealt with summarily by such a court.

Belfast Corporation and the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways.

MR. DEVLIN (Belfast, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolutions of public bodies and to other protests denouncing the proposed purchase of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramways by the Belfast Corporation; whether he could state the total number of voters on the municipal register for Belfast, and how many voted for and against the proposed purchase in the plebiscite taken on 3rd February, 1908; whether the method of taking the plebiscite was irregular, and voting papers were not collected from a large number of the ratepayers; whether he is aware that the proposed purchase has been denounced by representative ratepayers as a deal between the British Electric Traction Company and a section of the Belfast City Council; and whether, in view of all these circumstances, he proposes to take any steps to prevent the completion of the proposed purchase.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are informed by the town clerk of Belfast that the number of voters on the municipal register is 65,797. The number of voting papers collected and returned in connection with the plebiscite referred to was 54,810. Of these 24,733 were in favour of the proposed purchase, 12,575 were against it, 12,265 were unmarked, and 5,237 were incorrectly filled up. The plebiscite was taken in the manner prescribed by The Borough Funds (Ireland) Act, 1888. The voting papers were distributed and collected by the constabulary. The difference in the numbers distributed and collected is accounted for by the facts that many of the voting papers had been mislaid or destroyed, or that the constabulary could not obtain admission to the houses when they called to take up the papers. As regards the remainder of the Question, I do not think that I can usefully add anything to my Answer of the 7th February. The matters referred to would be for the consideration of the Parliamentary Committee before whom the Bill may come, and I do not propose to take any steps in anticipation of the decision of the Committee.

Extra Police.—Irish Disturbed Districts.

LORD BALCARRES: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many extra police above the normal establishment are quartered in the disturbed districts of Ireland; and the approximate cost which will be laid upon each county therefor.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The numbers of extra police at present serving in counties are as follows:—

Counties.	Head Constables.	Sergeants and Constables.
Cavan - - - - - - -	—	3
Clare - - - - - - - -	1	56
Cork - - - - - - - -	—	4
Galway - - - - - - -	1	235
King's - - - - - - -	—	24
Leitrim - - - - - - -	—	19
Longford - - - - - - -	—	21
Meath - - - - - - -	—	51
Roscommon - - - - - -	2	95
Westmeath - - - - - - -	—	35
Totals - - - -	4	543

The charges to be made against the counties for such extra forces are at the rate of £43 6s. per annum for each head constable, and at the rate of £34 9s. 3d. for each sergeant or constable. The total charge against counties in respect of the extra force now serving is therefore at the rate of £18,886 6s. 9d. per annum.

Cost of Extra Police in Irish Disturbed Districts.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the names of the counties in respect of which the vote for extra police is applied for; the names of the counties upon which a claim has been made for contributions from the rates in respect of extra police; the amount of same, together with the period covered during which the extra police were in the respective counties; and whether he can state the extent of the local force and of the extra force in each of these counties.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The amounts asked for in the Supplementary Estimate are not based on the expenditure county by county, but on a consideration of the total expenditure throughout the country in the period from 1st April last to the time when the Supplementary Estimate was prepared. The accounts for extra police are made up half-yearly to 30th September and 31st March. The following table shows the claims made against counties and cities for the half-year to 30th September, 1907, together with the established free force and the extra force at present serving—

County.	Amount.	Free Quota.	Extra Force (Sergeants and Constables).
	£. s. d.		
Antrim - - - - -	30 12 10	241	—
Armagh - - - - -	171 18 3	185	—
Cavan - - - - -	51 13 11	169	3
Clare - - - - -	938 19 9	367	56
Cork - - - - -	153 13 8	701	4
Down - - - - -	187 19 4	253	—
Galway - - - - -	1,174 16 6	616	235
Kildare - - - - -	23 3 7	142	—
King's - - - - -	285 7 1	164	24
Leitrim - - - - -	322 15 3	147	19
Londonderry - - -	32 0 4	122	—
Londonderry City - -	85 12 8	90	—
Longford - - - - -	94 10 4	110	21
Meath - - - - -	33 0 7	172	51
Queen's - - - - -	3 0 8	131	—
Roscommon - - - -	1,699 14 9	256	95
Tipperary, North Riding -	108 19 11	203	—
Tyrone - - - - -	112 6 0	222	—
Westmeath - - - -	0 8 8	190	35

These sums are exclusive of £10,237 2*s*. 10*d*. and £310 16*s*. 8*d*. charged against Belfast and Londonderry City respectively on account of extra forces permanently located in those cities under local Acts.

ECCLESIASTICAL DISORDERS BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. CHARLES McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): In rising to move the Second Reading of this Bill I should like to say at the outset that it is not my intention to give any detailed statement of offences which have been committed against the law of the Church. On former occasions when Bills of this character have been moved it has been necessary to produce some evidence in order to found a case for the Bill, and the more particularly as at that time it was fashionable for those who opposed legislation to minimise the character of the evil that existed and to say that it was confined to a very few clergy in a very few churches. That fond delusion has been altogether dispelled by the Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Disorder which has justified the attitude of those who have been endeavouring for so many years to bring the subject before Parliament and has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt the existence of a revolutionary movement in the Church of England, the object of which, shortly stated, is to undo the work of the Reformation, to deprive the Church of all its characteristic Protestant features, and to restore her to the condition she was in before the Reformation, and to do that in defiance of all law and authority whether judicial or Parliamentary. The House of Commons has on two occasions affirmed the necessity for some such legislation as this. The Church Discipline Bill was first placed before the House by me nine years ago, and it was met by an Amendment by Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General, speaking on behalf of the Government in the following terms—

> "That this House, while not prepared to accept a measure which creates fresh offences and ignores the authority of the bishops in maintaining the discipline of the Church, is of opinion that if the efforts now being made by the archbishop and bishops to secure the due obedience of the clergy are not speedily effectual further legislation will be required to maintain the observance of the existing law of the Church of the Realm."

That Amendment was carried by a majority of 154. Now I call the attention of the House to the word "speedily" in that Amendment. Nine years have passed away since then and no one will pretend that the efforts of the bishops and archbishops have been effectual in subduing the disorder. Therefore we are justified in again asking the House to consider the question of legislation. In this Bill we have endeavoured to avoid two defects which the House of Commons pointed out in the Bill which we first introduced. We have created no fresh offences and we have not ignored but on the contrary have recognised the authority of the bishops. In 1903 another Church Discipline Bill somewhat different from its predecessor was produced by the hon. Member for the East Toxteth Division, and he was more successful than I was, for he carried the Second Reading by a majority of fifty-one. There we have a distinct authority by the House for the principle of all these Bills. After that the ballot gave us no chance for a number of years, but in 1906 a Bill to all intents and purposes the same as the Church Discipline Bill, though differing somewhat in machinery, was introduced, read a first time, and printed. The same thing was done in 1907 and in 1908 we have at last the long sought for opportunity of presenting the Bill again. I ask the House to have some sympathy with the position of private members. Private members have to deal with the question, for the good reason that the Government, neither on one side nor the other, is disposed to deal with it. It is apparent on the face of it what great difficulties there are in dealing with the matter from the party point of view. Therefore I deal with it from the non-party point of view. I am here to-day not as a member of one party or of the other, but as a member of a party which places Protestantism above party; and it is a matter of indifference to me from which side of the House the Bill is introduced. But as this is of necessity the work of private Members, I think we are entitled to ask the protection of the House in respect to the few liberties which still remain to us as private Members. If, as seems possible from the state of the Order Paper, though I hope it may not prove to be so, the Bill is going to be smothered with hostile Amendments, what chance have we of bringing the subject before the House? The country is waiting and is looking forward to the result of the debate with anxiety. I hope such an answer will be given as will show the country that Parliament, to which they have appealed, and in which they have confidence, will not fail them in this matter. I have omitted one very important item from the calendar of events, and that is that in 1904 the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was appointed by the late Government, and in June, 1906, that Commission reported. I should like to say a word as to the constitution of that Commission. Rightly or wrongly, several of us objected to its constitution on two grounds. In the first place, we thought it was unfair that there should be three bishops on the Commission when the charges that were made included the bishops as well as the clergy, and thus made the bishops virtually judges in their own case. In the second place, we thought it unfair that no member of the Church Protestant party was placed upon that Commission. I speak of every member of that Commission with the utmost respect; I say nothing against them but this—that there was no Member of the Commission who had our confidence or represented our views. We, whose agitation had brought about the appointment of the Commission, were studiously left outside. I daresay we deserved it. It is the fate of all men of decided opinions to be treated with indifference, to be tabooed. I sometimes think that if some great question of public morals were before the House, and if a Royal Commission were appointed to deal with it, the statesmanlike view would be that all rogues and honest men should alike be left off the Commission, and that the consideration of the matter should be entrusted to men of moderate honesty and of elastic virtue. I wish, however, to bear testimony to the fact that the Royal Commission, so far as regards the compiling of evidence, performed that duty with the utmost impartiality. It could not have been done better; but when we come to the summarising of that evidence, and still more to the recommendations, I seem to see traces of some dominant ecclesiastical influence. I ask the House to bear with me a few moments while I tell them in a few words what was done. The Commission took evidence regarding 687 services in 559 churches, and in these churches they found the following illegal practices. Mass vestments were used in 491 churches; the Confiteor and Last Gospel were used in 142 churches; the chalice was ceremonially mixed in 439 churches; wafers were ostensibly used in 279 churches; the manual acts were hidden in 438 churches; the sanctus bell was used in 212 churches; incense was ceremonially used in 99 churches; portable lights were carried in 79 churches; the Holy Communion was celebrated without any communicants besides the celebrant at 114 services, and without the minimum number of communicants required by the rubrics at many other services; the Canon of the Mass was used in more than 100 churches; and the Sacrament was reserved in 13 churches. I have to remind the House that each one of these practices has been expressly condemned by the Ecclesiastical Courts. The findings of the Commission only referred to portions out of a large number of churches in England and Wales, for, of course, the Commission could only deal with a portion of the case; but on referring to their Report the House will find that although they only found mass vestments in use in 491 churches, they admitted that the practice existed in over 1,500 churches in England and Wales, and that although incense was only reported as having been used in ninety-nine churches, they were satisfied that it existed in 393 churches. But that is not the whole case. The Commissioners found that a large amount of literature was published with the object of promoting sacerdotal and illegal views with regard to the doctrine and ritual of the Church of England, and that, particularly in connection with children's eucharist, manuals were circulated teaching the doctrine of transubstantiation, and containing services of communion which approximated more or less closely to the services of the Roman Catholic mass, and all this with the object of disseminating sacerdotal views in the minds of the rising generation. Further than that, the Commissioners said that although they did not consider it came within the direct purview of their inquiry, they were satisfied that the practice of auricular confession was increasing to a very large extent. Indeed, we have the case of St. Peter's, London Docks, in regard to which there is evidence that in 1906 there were no less than 690 confessions. If that be true, is there any wonder that the Commission pronounced such a state of things as an offence against public order, a scandal to religion, and a cause of weakness in the Church of England? It may be said that some of the practices are of a very trivial character. But all these things taken together show a concerted endeavour to reintroduce the Mass into the Church of England. When I use the word Mass I wish it to be understood that I cast no disparagement upon the Mass itself, or as used in the Roman Catholic Church. We have no quarrel with the Roman Catholic Church, and we do not wish to say a word that might be considered slighting as to its services or offensive to any of its members. We object to these things in the Church of England, not in the Church of Rome, just as much, for instance, as if Liberal opinions were found on the Unionist side of the House. They would be all right in their place, but they would be wrong if found on these benches. The late Bishop of London said the object of the Church of England at the Reformation was to turn the Mass into the Communion. The object of the ritualistic party is to turn the Communion into the Mass. The great object of this movement is to reintroduce the Mass and the confessional into the Church of England. That is why, in my judgment, no compromise on this question is possible. A great many amiable people were always wanting to compromise things; but in this case there is such a contradiction, such an antagonism of opinion, that the thing cannot be done. The very things that the ritualists want at any price we will not have at any cost. The result is that we shall have to fight the matter out, and the sooner we are allowed to fight it out the better. We shall only get a false peace by trying to get concessions and compromises. They would only postpone the evil day. I may be asked, has there been any improvement since the Report of the Royal Commission was issued? So far as I am able to judge, and so far as I am advised, there has been no material improvement; there has been no disposition on the part of the bishops to put the law into force, although the first recommendation of the Commission was that before the bishops did anything else they should, by the exercise of their authority, and by initiating law suits if necessary, compel obedience to the law in matters of great significance. The bishops have not done that, but they had done something else. Hardly was the ink dry on the signatures to this Commission when the Archbishop of Canterbury went to the Prime Minister and got letters of business for submitting these matters to Convocation. Then his Grace went to Convocation and made a speech in which he showed a very strong disinclination to let the matter come before this House, and a Committee of Bishops was appointed to go into the question of vestments. Now, every member of that Committee of Bishops had committed himself, and was known to be in favour of the legalising of these vestments. [" No, no ".] Is it surprising that the report of Convocation should be in that direction? But I submit that Convocation is altogether an unsuitable body to which to refer matters of Church reform. Convocation is an archaic institution; it has no representation of the laity whatever; it has a very imperfect representation of the clergy; it has no representation at all of the unbeneficed clergy; and a most irregular representation of the beneficed clergy. It has far too much of the official element, and is entirely unfit to deal with this question, and I cannot understand what led the Royal Commission in their wisdom to suggest that this matter should be referred to Convocation. It may be said there are the Houses of Laymen, but what are the Houses of Laymen? Is it supposed that the Houses of Laymen are representative of the laity of the Church? They are nothing of the kind. The laity composing the Houses of Laymen are gentlemen connected with the Church of England, but they are not elected on any proper elective basis. They are selected in most dioceses by a comparatively small ecclesiastical coterie. I am a member of the York House of Laymen, and I am perhaps very ungrateful, but that is my experience, and it is idle to suppose that the Houses of Laymen can express the view of the laity of England and Wales. If we are not to look to Convocation, where are we to look? Are we to look to the bishops? I always feel very great difficulty in speaking of the bishops—I have a great respect for their authority, but my regard for the truth must rise superior to all other considerations, and I am bound to say—although I acknowledge that the bishops have made many efforts to restore order in the Church, although some bishops, like the Bishop of Newcastle, have made a noble stand for obedience to the law, and other bishops, such as the Bishop of Hereford and the Bishop of Carlisle, not to speak of others, have shown that they are not at all in sympathy with the illegal practices, but on the contrary are in sympathy with the law and with the cause of the Reformation—yet at the same time the predominant party on the episcopal bench have shown themselves on the side of rather than against the ritualistic movement of the Church of England. The net result of their influence on both sides is to show that it largely predominates in favour of the ritualistic party. Laymen in the North of England, at any rate, regard the bishops without confidence in this matter. What did the Royal Commission say about their inaction? Thirty years ago what are called eucharistic or mass vestments were unknown in the Church of England. In 1902 they were used in over 1,500 churches. Will the House credit the fact mentioned in the Commission's Report that not one bishop now on the bench has made any general order, or any general remonstrance, against the use of these vestments? They have sat still and allowed the evil to grow up without any effort to check it. With regard to the veto, I would remind the House that out of twenty-three complaints which were brought under the Public Worship Regulations Act seventeen were vetoed by the bishops, and that the Royal Commission said regarding that—

> "In some cases the veto was unwisely and erroneously used, and defiance and lawlessness allowed to go unchecked."

As a result of this wholesome use of the veto, people feel it is useless to go to law, and the thing has fallen into disuse. The bishops have since supported disloyal clergy by their patronage and by their example. Take the case of the Bishop of London. He has taken upon himself to compromise the churches with regard to the use of incense and with regard to reservation, although the law distinctly condemns these practices. The Bishop of London says, "I am above the law; I will make any compromise I like, and if I go to one church, and can't get them to accept my compromise, I will go to another church." If we are not to go to the bishops, are we to go back to litigation? That is useless. It has been found by experience that litigation is too expensive. The costs in three celebrated ecclesiastical suits amounted respectively to £7,761, £11,015, and £17,485. It took three suits and sixteen years to deprive one clergyman. The law is utterly useless in this matter because it is too costly and expensive. No doubt at one time we did think that by abolishing the bishop's veto and simplifying procedure we might utilise the Courts of law. But that time has gone past. The evil has grown to such an extent that we cannot deal with it by the Courts of law. The clergy repudiate the Courts of law. What are we to do? Are we to bring a separate suit in every case? The thing is impossible. It would take a hundred years or more to deal with the questions in the Courts of law. Therefore, we come to Parliament as the final Court of Appeal, the grand inquest of the nation. Now I come to the Bill of which I have the honour to move the Second Reading. This Bill has a precedent in what took place at the Reformation in the second year of Elizabeth. At that time, although the Act of Uniformity had been passed legalising the present Prayer Book, it was found impossible to carry that by mere process of law, and, accordingly, Commissioners were appointed to visit the various churches throughout the country, and to restrain the clergy from illegal practices, and a later precedent is found in the Act of 1877. Under Clause 4 of this Bill a Commission of five persons of judicial experience is to be appointed to hold office for ten years only. They are to have purely administrative functions. By Clause 5 the bishop of the diocese is to be at liberty to associate himself with the Commissioners as an unpaid Commissioner in respect of any church that may be complained against in his diocese. With regard to the scope of the Commission, it has not to deal with all questions at issue, but only those scheduled in the Act. You will find in the schedule of the Bill illegal practices and a number of illegal ornaments which have been condemned by the ecclesiastical Courts. As to procedure, the Commission are to address inquiries to the churchwardens and incumbent of every church which is the subject of complaint before the Commissioners. An answer is to be given within thirty days, and if the answer is that no illegal practices exist, that ends the matter. But if the answer is unsatisfactory, or no answer is sent, or if illegal practices or illegal ornaments are admitted, then the Commissioners are empowered to hold a local inquiry, and they are to have power to obtain evidence and ascertain the facts of the case. Then, when they have reported to the Commission, another effort is to be made to deal with the matter by the ecclesiastical authorities. Three months will be given for this purpose, and if within three months the clergy implicated would give an undertaking in writing not to continue the illegal practices, the matter is to be at an end. If not, the Commission is to be empowered to suspend the incumbents for three months, and after a further three months, if the incumbents are still refractory, they are to be deprived. The advantages of the Bill are that it does not interfere with the episcopal function, it is inexpensive, and it is effective, because it is able in a large number of cases to deal with the matter in a very short time. I submit it is the best way of dealing with the subject if we are really in earnest in the endeavour to root out this evil. From whatever point of view we look at it, I think the course proposed is preferable to any other. You may look at the matter from the Churchman's point of view. The Amendment proposed, and which I understand is to be taken, offers as an alternative, disestablishment. I ask Churchmen, Do they prefer disestablishment to the remedy afforded by this Bill? Are they willing that our National Church, with all its great traditions and with all its historical associations, with all its great possibilities, and with all its influence, shall be sacrificed at the bidding of the party of lawless clerics, who, because they cannot get their own way, want to pull down the Church about their heads? The Church of England does not belong to them; it belongs to us. What are they? They are merely Ritualistic Nonconformists. Whether we are broad, or high, or low, it does not matter if we are Churchmen and within the law, the Church belongs to us, and I refuse to allow my Church to be taken away because a certain number of lawless men will not be restrained by the Courts or by Parliament. With regard to Nonconformists I would ask: Are you satisfied with the remedy? Are you satisfied that disestablishment is within the range of practical politics? It seems to have hung fire in regard to the Church in Wales, and with regard to the Church of England it cannot come for many years. Are you going to allow the Church of England to continue, with all its endowments, without any restraint by the law, in order to follow the bent of what is now the dominating ecclesiastical section of the present day, and go on sacerdotalising the nation? In my humble opinion one of the greatest dangers of the present day is the growing disregard for all law and authority. I think when we come down to this House we have many evidences of that, and I, for one, honestly believe that it is to some extent due to the lawlessness in our churches. If you have lawlessness in the pulpit, you will have lawlessness in the pew. I recollect reading a letter which a noble Lord who used to be an ornament of this House wrote to *The Times* justifying some great passive resistance movement if the last Education Bill had become law, and he actually referred to the success of the clergy in defying the law. In view of all this, I ask the House of Commons to accept this Bill. I do not commit myself to the machinery. We leave that entirely to the judgment of the House in Committee. It may be improved upon, and no Member by voting for the Bill will pledge himself to the machinery. All that we ask the House to do in voting for the Second Reading, is to assent to the simple principle that the law of the land, and the law of the Church as declared by the Courts having jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs, must be obeyed by clergymen and laymen alike. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Charles McArthur.*)

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.) moved an Amendment declaring that no Bill would provide an effective remedy for ecclesiastical disorders in the Church of England which did not make provision for the separation of the Church from the State, and confer upon the Church, thus liberated from State control, the power to regulate its own affairs. He said he had very little complaint to make of the tone or temper of the speech of the hon. Member for the Kirkdale division. The House must recognise that, although the hon. Member said things which must of necessity offend, he did so from what was transparent sincerity of motive. The mover of the Bill felt strongly on this matter, and had a right to feel strongly, and he had put his case before those who most disagreed with him in a way as satisfactory as possible under the circumstances. He had only one criticism to make, and that had reference to the allusion the hon. Member had made, he supposed, to himself, when he appealed in the name of a private Member and deprecated a measure of this kind on a Second Reading being smothered with hostile Amendments. No one felt more than himself the powerless condition of the private Member in this House, and no one would be more reluctant to meet the open debate of Motions or Bills of private Members by any kind of cunning or clever turning of the question by Amendments which were not sincere, to a point not at issue. This was a perfectly sincere Amendment; it was sincere to himself, although that was not of importance to the House, but he thought he could ask the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone to testify that it was not only in connection with Bills dealing with ecclesiastical disorders that he had advocated with some enthusiasm the separation of Church and State. It was sincere to the country. The hon. Member for the Kirkdale division had said that his proposal was practical politics, and that disestablishment was not within the region of practical politics. He could assure the hon. Member that disestablishment was far more within the region of practical politics than the preposterous scheme contained in his Bill. It was sincere to those who were Members of the House, because it was perfectly impossible in discussing such a large measure as this, and endeavouring to turn forces which were at present static, into forces which would be dynamic, not to follow up those forces to their ultimate issue. He had no intention or inclination to take up the time of the House in discussing the existence of ecclesiastical disorder, or the nature, significance, or extent of the disorder, because that was outside the scope of his Amendment, which acknowledged the existence of ecclesiastical disorder. There were things in existence in the Church to-day which were emphatically unjustifiable, which he deplored as much as the hon. Member for the Kirkdale division did. He only wished he could think that the most serious kinds of ecclesiastical disorders were those the hon. Member had laid before the House. If the question were raised at all, the House would have to decide sooner or later, and perhaps sooner rather than later, how it was going to deal with the whole question of the slow and steady drift of the English people away from the dogmatic position of the Church of England as by law established. If once they began to legislate on these lines by commission and schedule, they would be making legislation which would throw the whole of the English Church into a condition of chaos and confusion. Having taken their precedent of the Elizabethan settlement, they would be compelled to carry out that precedent, and construct a new church as an Established Church, whether warped back to what they happened to think was the Reformation standard, or adjusted to the theology of the twentieth century, he could not realise. On the other hand, so long as they realised what had been the affirmation of this House, that the separation of the Church from the State was not only a remedy for ecclesiastical disorder, but a desirable result in itself for many other reasons, then they must agree that, so far from the question being impossible of solution, it only waited for courage on the part of some Government to take it up and push it to its logical and desirable conclusion. He asked the House to agree that his remedy was a perfectly satisfactory one, and that of the hon. Member for the Kirkdale division an unsatisfactory one. The hon. Member had given them an outline of his Bill, but he had not done full justice to its inquisitorial and persecuting character. To say that in voting for the Second Reading they would not be voting for the machinery of the Bill was really absurd. It was like voting for the Second Reading of an Education Bill under a general idea that it was desirable to have popular control of the schools. The Bill set up a Commission and employed barristers of not less than ten years standing, with substantial emoluments. He generally noticed that when something particularly indefensible was suggested, it was left to the work of barristers of not less than ten years standing, with substantial emoluments. They were the means of making the machinery move more smoothly. The Commission was to proceed by an investigation of what was continuing in the churches at the present time, under the guidance of a third schedule carefully compiled by the promoters of the Bill, but under what conditions of exclusion or inclusion it passed his wit, or the wit of anyone else, to comprehend. There were a number of words in the schedule which he himself was a sufficiently poor ritualist not to know the meaning of, and whether they referred to attitudes or to garments he could not say. They were words that looked forbidding until one could find the interpretation of them. The mover of the Bill had rather scared him by mentioning "genuflexion," until he realised that it was a clumsy Latin synonym for kneeling at prayer, which, however reprehensible it might be, was not criminal. The spectacle of a barrister waiting in the background to see if the clergyman knelt at prayer was one not likely to create enthusiasm in the public mind.

*Mr. CHARLES McARTHUR: In the technical sense of the word genuflexion has been condemned by the Court as illegal.

Mr. MASTERMAN said there were many of these so-called illegal practices which had been declared legal, even by a Court which the advocates of lawfulness recognised as the ultimate Court of Appeal—the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. There were others with regard to which the decisions were contradictory. Others still, even the hon. Member would agree in saying, if they were challenged once more in the Courts, would probably be declared legal instead of illegal. So much was this the case that the head of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the Lord Chancellor, declared in 1902 that the rule of finality applicable to decisions of the Privy Council in reference to rights of property was never binding as regards decisions relating to ritual and ecclesiastical practice which depended to some extent upon historical investigation. That meant in effect that these questions were declared to be still open. So much was the mover of the Bill afflicted with the possibility of this, and so little prepared to accept a legal decision if it was against the particular results which he desired, that he proposed the most preposterous of all these preposterous clauses—No. 17. That clause sought not only to challenge the law, but to make the law—to decide that those things which he disliked should be regarded as illegal, quite apart from the Privy Council or the Ecclesiastical Commission. He deplored as much as did the hon. Member the introduction into the English Church from foreign sources of such apparatus as confessional boxes in churches, or vessels for the provision of holy water in English churches, but they were told by the large and aggressive organisation which was supporting the hon. Member that at least 7,000 or 8,000 of the 20,000 clergy of the Church of England were involved in these illegalities which the Bill sought to remedy. That meant a campaign, not for a return to the Reformation settlement, but for the tearing up of the Reformation compromise, which had been deliberately adopted in order to provide for the two parties in the Church, generally known as Protestant and Catholic, living in some kind of harmony in the future. It was not a campaign, so far as he could see, for which there was any special reason in 1908. Such campaigns had been tried before, and with disastrous results. But, granted that these men were all disloyal, and that they could take quite possibly a short-cut line between legality and illegality on this matter—which he thought impossible—did the promoters of the Bill think they could make their machinery for ecclesiastical disorder stop at scheduling just that particular kind of disorder which was repugnant to themselves? That schedule would receive considerable modification as it passed through Committee of that House, and also outside. He had no authority to do it; he would hate to do it if he had the authority. He was not suggesting that there should be reprisals by one party against another party if this machinery became law; but one could not read the dolorous story of ecclesiastical controversy, even in recent times, without realising that when once this kind of thing was started there was no keeping back the inflammatory feelings which were immediately aroused. The Commissioners and the barristers were required to deal with very large questions of ecclesiastical disorder. They were going to endeavour to adjust the faith and doctrine, practice and ornaments, of the Church with a settlement of Elizabethan time, and when they had expelled every Low Church clergyman who did not believe in baptismal regeneration, every Broad Church clergyman who could not repeat with some enthusiasm the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, and every High Church clergyman who violated their most exiguous standards of ritual, what would they have left of the Church? They would have made not a solitude, but a ruin, and they might call it "peace" if they liked. There might be reasons for proceeding along those lines; there might be people who would be glad to see the overthrow of the great moral and spiritual forces in the Church which existed in the past and might operate in the future. It might be even that the hon. Member for Kirkdale, if he was not misinterpreting him, had deliberately decided that it would be better to take the risk of this, if he could get his adjustment of ritual and ornament, however desirable that might be, than to adopt the alternative system which the Amendment proposed. But until he had rather more evidence of a more general feeling on that matter in the House than he had received so far, he would refuse to believe that. He would refuse to believe that even those who had no kind of sympathy with the Church of England as by law established had any kind of desire through such methods as these to turn the whole energies and ideals of their Church from methods of social regeneration and work for the welfare of the people into these squalid and impossible arguments in the Courts of law concerning details of ritual. The hon. Member for Kirkdale had told them what was perfectly true—he would not deny it—that this was the Supreme High Court of Parliament, and that what it did must have the force of law; and that what Parliament decided must be obeyed. It was true that force was their ultimate weapon; it would be used as it had been used before. But if there was one lesson that was written over the dismal pages of ecclesiastical controversy, it was that in matters of conscientious conviction force was no remedy. There was another Court of Appeal, the inexplicably strong sentiment among the people which time and again had determined that what had been decided in Parliament should not continue. They had seen that in connection with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Mr. Gladstone was almost alone on that Bill in making this protest—

> "Here, once and for all, I enter my most solemn, earnest, and deliberate protest against all attempts to meet the spiritual dangers of the Church by temporal legislation of a penal character."

The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill became utterly a dead letter, and it did not reflect much credit on our Parliamentary history. And so it was with the Public Worship Regulation Act, which was definitely designed to put down ritualism. The result was that the people who were formerly fanatics became martyrs, but all the moderate men were thrown into friendly alliance with the advanced men whose action they had deplored, and for seven years there was a miserable fight in putting unfortunate clergymen into gaol, and not knowing how on earth to get them out again. Finally it was abandoned, it being decided that whatever other methods should be adopted that was not the kind which it was desirable to pursue. A more recent example of conscientious conviction breaking down the law was passive resistance. In that case, a law which had much to justify it had to be amended because large numbers of ordinarily moral and law-abiding men and women preferred to be haled to gaol sooner than carry out its provisions. It was perfectly true that the present Bill sought to avoid imprisonment by deprivation. Technically the ritualists were not sent to prison because as ritualists they had broken the Public Worship Regulation Act, but for contempt of Court. So it was also with the passive resisters. But everyone knew what the real facts were, and that we had here the question, whether the deliberate moral affirmation of large numbers, supported by others who did not take these extreme views, was sufficient to break down a law which might readily become an instrument of persecution. The hon. Member for Kirkdale said that the law must be obeyed. There was not one man who was not a lawyer who believed that this particular controversy of 300 years could be settled in that way by such a Bill. The court which exercised supreme authority in matters of ritual had been condemned by two Royal Commissions. It was not a spiritual court, and its authority in these spiritual matters—not in temporal matters—had been repudiated by large numbers of men who could not be written down offhand as either criminals or lunatics. Yet it proposed to deal with them as if they were both. However foolish these quarrels about trivial matters like ritual might seem to be, and however divergent they might be from the far more important questions of doctrine which were independent of them—and not in the least degree met by the Bill—[An HON. MEMBER: No.]—he was one of those who put emphasis on these things, and quite honestly believed that they were carrying out the law of the church in the plain words of the ornaments rubric, and declared honestly that if some spiritual authority were established which would represent the spiritual mind of the church in the matter, they were entirely willing to sacrifice all these comparatively unimportant matters in accordance with its decision. That was why he hoped that the measure of disestablishment, of which the House had approved already by a large majority, might be found to result in a friendly, satisfactory, and harmonious reconciliation even of those parties in the church who now glared so angrily at each other in the pages of newspaper controversy. It was said by some that this would result in the Church being shattered and destroyed, and by others that it would be the triumph of the ritualistic faction. He believed it would result in neither. He believed that toleration was as much as loyalty the legitimate child of freedom; and that freedom would mean a new era of toleration, a new realisation of how much those who were the members of this spiritual society had in common when dealing with the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. He was sure that the moderate men would be found to restrain the extremists, instead of, as by this Bill, forcing the controversy into even more bitter channels. It was quite possible that some extremists on both sides will have to go; that their proper place was not in that spiritual society which represented the historic Church of England. He would say, let them go, and if they could find a spiritual home elsewhere, let them find it. But he believed there would be a great advance in religious sincerity as against the hypocricy of the present conditions; there would be the removal of a profound grievance among those who were not members of the Church of England and the pouring out of a new spirit of enthusiasm among those who were. He believed this was the just, peaceful, and only remedy for disorder in the Church. If he had said anything to offend any sincere religious conviction in the heat of debate, he asked forgiveness, for nothing was further from his intention. He had been told that he was impelled to this Amendment by the fact that he was in the jargon of the day, a ritualist and a Romaniser. He never considered it worth while to answer such imputations. He was astonished at the attention and enthusaism which were given to those questions of ornament, ceremonial, and decoration. They were essentially irrevelant to the larger questions that had to be faced, and to the very questions which afflicted the hon. Member for Kirkdale. Every one of the practices which the hon. Member had mentioned could be carried on in whitewashed churches with movable Communion tables and with clergymen in black gowns. In the same way the most elaborate pomp and ceremonial were perfectly compatible with the simple preaching of the Protestant faith. It was not because he was in sympathy with any particular ritual that he asked the House to accept the peaceable instead of the persecuting method of settling this question. He might be prejudiced by the fact that that particular party in the Church against which this weapon of persecution was to be forged numbered amongst it most of the Liberal and all the Socialist clergy and great congregations, who were doing to-day what he was longing to see done by every religious community in the country. Search where they would in the heart of populous cities, where the struggle was most desperate against social disease, poverty, and social confusion, there they had the work of these men, many of whose variations from the accepted standards he deplored, with no aggrieved parishoners, only asking to be left alone—men of good temper, good will, and humility, inspired with a passionate devotion for the welfare of the common people. He made no appeal for toleration of lawlessness on the ground of social service. These men themselves made no such plea. He would join with alacrity in any crusade for their inhibition, for their deprivation, for their harassing, for their imprisonment, if they could show him any compensating advantage to be obtained in the welfare of the Church or the advancement of true religion and virtue. No such compensating advantage had been shown here, and he would respectfully suggest to those who disliked the spread, by these means, of the doctrines which they deplored, whether they could not find a more fruitful means of checking it than the contribution of large financial subscriptions to agressive political organisations or the ingenuity which devised such fantastic measures as this, in similar rivalry and honourable service for the welfare of those sections of our people who had fallen into ruin and decay. There were forces on the horizon which might be destined to make, which were already making, all this noisy controversy concerning ritual a very small thing. In the face of changes which might well shake this Christian civilisation of ours to its very base, he entreated those who were promoting this Bill to turn their minds and direct their energies to a more heroic, a more Christian crusade. He begged to move.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester) said he felt perfectly certain that the House would sympathise most keenly with the remarkably able speech to which they had just listened. It was absolutely impossible, for anyone taking further part in the debate, on that side of the question, to adduce further argument in favour of the Amendment which he had the honour to second. Although he had not agreed with everything which his hon. friend had said, he was sure that there was not a single Member of the House but must have been impressed by the speech to which they had just listened, with the extraordinary complexity of the question which had been introduced on that occasion. The Bill before them asked them to embark upon waters, very shallow, very stormy, and very difficult to navigate. History was absolutely against any hope that such legislation would be effective. The history of the ecclesiastical legislation in the Church of England and the history of the ecclesiastical legislation in the Church of Scotland, equally stood confronting the House that afternoon, telling it, however strong its opinions against lawlessness might be, nevertheless, danger, difficulty, and failure faced it, if it proposed to meet that situation of lawlessness by such methods as had been suggested by the hon. Member for Kirkdale. He spoke for himself, he did not rise to address the House as the representative of a party. This matter was purely a personal matter between Member and Member in this House. Nor did he venture to address the House as, in any sense whatever, a member of the Church of England. He never was a member of the Church of England; he did not believe he ever would be a member of it. He had no sympathy with what had been described there as lawlessness. He was not even attracted spiritually by those manifestations and exercises, which although not lawless, might be on the border of lawlessness. He was not concerned to defend from the inside anything that was going on in the Church. He ventured to address the House that afternoon simply as a Member of Parliament, simply as a citizen, simply remembering that there was the thing of flesh which the House could deal with, but there was the liberty of the spirit which it could never touch. Therefore when they turned to consider what the problem was, they had as men of common sense and good judgment to remember that it had arisen because there were two parties in the Church who did not agree on matters of historical interpretation. The simple question was what was the interpretation of the Order of the Church of England? One section said one thing and another section said another, and in order to settle that internal controversy in the Church, in which spiritual liberty was essentially involved, one section or another came to this secular House and asked them, Nonconformists, Baptists, Agnostics—men belonging to all the churches and men belonging to no church —to vote in the division lobbies that afternoon and declare that in their opinion, such and such, and such and such, were the historical practices of this church, with which perhaps they had no sympathy and to which at any rate they did not belong. [AN HON. MEMBER: It is the Established Church.] His hon. friend had just taken the words out of his mouth. The point which was made and the justification of those who promoted this Bill was that the Church with which they were asked to deal was the Established Church. Precisely; the Established Church had therefore got into a condition which compelled her as a spiritual organisation to come to them as a secular force, to settle by their secular authority the spiritual problems that she had to face. Was there a loyal member of the Church of England, was there a man who honoured his Church, or as a loyal member hoped to honour his church, a man who could look behind, across the rich history of this organisation, and look before at the magnificent opportunities which the future of this country seemed to offer to his Church, if she would only raise her hand and head guided by spiritual enthusiasm, who would tell them that an appeal to them and from that point of view was an honour to the Church, and was in keeping with the dignity of the Church, of which he professed to be a good member? Some members of the Church might square such a position with a loyal adherence to that Church; all he could say was that were he such a member it would be absolutely impossible for him to do it. What he, standing there that afternoon as a mere outsider, but as a Member of Parliament and a citizen, told these two sections of the Church was: "Go and settle your differences in a spiritual court, and not in a secular court." This undoubtedly was the highest court in the land, but hon. Members must always remember to qualify that by saying it was the highest secular court, not the highest spiritual court in the land. The moment the Church of England, as an Established Church, could not settle her spiritual and historical differences within herself and her own courts, her appeal to this House must not be to settle them for her, but to cut the connection between the State and the Church, and endow the Church with that spiritual freedom and sense of spiritual independence which were necessary in order that she should herself solve those difficulties. He spoke with some feeling in this matter because, although not a Churchman, all his ecclesiastical knowledge and his ecclesiastical prejudices were imparted to him by men who drank deep of those wells of spiritual freedom which bubbled up in the glorious days of 1843 in Scotland, when the Free Church came out from the Establishment, because this High Court, the highest court in the land, ventured to dictate to the Established Church of Scotland in regard to matters which were germane to her spiritual being. It was not long since that an appeal to the secular court by a mere handful of men, who stood loyal to the letter of the law, deprived the Free Church of Scotland of her property, because she had moved with the times, and because she had refused to allow the dead hand of tradition to numb her, so that her spiritual activities might be limited. The decision was given in favour of this small handful of people to whom he had referred, and what happened? It might have been very good law, but it was exceptionally bad ecclesiastical politics, and this House upset the secular law and went behind it and held that it could not be applied to a spiritual organisation. They held that the Church was not a limited liability company, and that the liberty of the Church could not be "cribbed, cabined, and confined" within a certain declaration known as a confession of faith or the Apostles' Creed, or anything of the kind. They declared that the Church was a living organisation; that she must interpret and re-interpret her position; that she must search history for her sanctions and her practices, and that no secular court had the least power to interfere with her spiritual development. After having declared that the law was the law, this House proclaimed that there was something greater than it, that this was the living part of the Scottish Free Church, and they restored to her the property which had been taken away from her by the legal decision. And now to-day certain hon. Members wanted them to make the same mistake with regard to the Church of England that the Courts made with regard to the Free Church of Scotland. He did not believe for a single moment that a majority of the Members of the House was going to take any such step. He said, and this was the Nonconformist position, that they did not want to interfere with the liberty of the Church of England or in her disputes. They simply wanted to say that the old mediæval notion of organic connection between the Church and State had been proved by recent events that had happened inside the Church of England to be no longer a practical policy. As to the lawlessness, with which he had no sympathy whatever, and the other practices which did not touch him at all, and never had appealed to him in any sense or to any degree, if they were to be carried on, let them be carried on by a Church independent and responsible to herself. They in that secular Court, the House of Commons, declared that the time had come—and they asked the Ministry to take notice of the declaration—and events inside the Church had hastened it and made it critical, when the Church should go free from the State, and the State should decline to recognise the Establishment any longer. For that reason he had the very greatest pleasure and much honour in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, and add the words, 'No Bill will provide an effective remedy for ecclesiastical disorders in the Church of England which does not make provision for the separation of the Church from the State, and confer upon the Church, thus liberated from State control, the power to regulate its own affairs.'"—(*Mr. Masterman.*)]

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

SIR G. **KEKEWICH** (Exeter) hoped the House would be under no misapprehension as to the true meaning, character, and intention of this Amendment. It was not really an Amendment in favour of disestablishment. They had not long ago discussed disestablishment, and there was no reason whatever why they should discuss it a second time. The Amendment was an attempt to side-track the Bill. It was purely a ritualistic Amendment and an attempt to strangle the Bill and to allow the ritualistic clergy, who had broken the law with impunity, to go on breaking it. He would not oppose the Amendment because he was opposed to disestablishment. On the contrary he was a strong supporter of disestablishment, and the sooner it came the better he would feel. He believed that if the Bill were passed it would not have the effect of retarding disestablishment, but would actually accelerate it, but this Amendment, if carried, would not bring disestablishment one day nearer. Disestablishment was bound to come in the long run, but was probably twenty or thirty years off or more. What the Amendment wanted was to give the law-breaking clergy a free hand during those twenty or thirty years to finish their work of converting the Church of England into a pseudo Catholic Church—a Church which was partly spurious Roman Catholic. If the work done by the ritualists during the last fifty years was supplemented by the work of another twenty years there would not be much left at the end of that time of the Protestant influence in the English Church. It was not the laity who supported or would support the law-breaking clergy. He believed they were mainly Protestant and evangelical, but in twenty years more it was impossible to say what they would be, and by that time there would be very few clergy in the Church who were not ritualistic. The present output of clergy came mainly from theological colleges which were ritualistic. The fact was that the places of the evangelical clergy were being taken day by day by these young men. They were appointed to curacies and incumbencies, and as soon as a man was ordained, he apparently thought he had a right to break the vows that he took at his ordination. When at the end of twenty years disestablishment came, what would be the position of the Nonconformist Churches? They were the offspring of the Reformation, like the Anglican Church, and they would be face to face with a homogeneous Anglo-Catholic Church—a Church which would be much closer to the Roman Catholic than to any Protestant Church. Possibly Nonconformists would by that time have been reinforced by Protestants driven out from the Church of England, but surely Protestant Churches did not desire to wreck the Protestantism of a kindred Church. The Bill was not directed against any law-abiding section of the Church. There was plenty of room for High and Broad Church, but there was no room for the law-breaking section. The Bill was directed simply against the men who broke the law as laid down by the courts. There was not a single offence scheduled in the Bill which had not been condemned by the Courts or might not be dealt with under the present law, but the procedure under the present law was impracticable. Each offender required a suit to himself carried on before the Judicial Committee at considerable cost. The hon. Member for West Ham had spoken of the proceedings under the Bill as inquisitorial and tyrannical—the hon. Member had not spared his epithets in any part of his speech.

Mr. MASTERMAN: I never used the word tyrannical—inquisitorial only.

Sir G. KEKEWICH said it was certainly not tyranny and it was not persecution. Under the existing law, when a suit was taken to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, if the defendant was recalcitrant he could be condemned to imprisonment for contempt of court. But under this Bill he could not be committed to prison. He merely suffered deprivation because he had broken his contract. He held his living on certain conditions, one of which was that he should profess and teach the doctrines of the Church of England, and if he did not carry out his side of the contract there was no reason why he should be allowed to benefit by the other side. He had no doubt that when disestablishment came within practical politics he would hear it called tyrannical by the very same people who now condemned this procedure as tyrannical. He did not think it possible that Parliament could stand aside and see the law continually broken without providing some sort of remedy. The Bill had been three times introduced into the House, and the real question before them, as it seemed to them, was not whether disestablishment was desirable, but whether the fact that it was desirable should prevent other steps being taken to check illegalities, and as he believed the matter was urgent and admitted of no delay he would vote against the Amendment, and, consequently, in favour of the Second Reading.

*Mr. **ILLINGWORTH** (Yorkshire, W.R., Shipley) said the pleasant silence of two years of one's first Parliament was not to be lightly broken; and in so doing he would throw himself on the generous consideration of the House, which ever since his entry had impressed him as one of its most chivalrous characteristics. In supporting the Amendment of his hon. friend, whose sound and fearless principles were adorned by the power and eloquence with which he was able to present them to the House, he would use such moderation as a Nonconformist might use in approaching a principle for which they had been fighting for years and for which they would fight until they prevailed. The somewhat alarming title, the Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill, seemed to picture to their minds in the light of their recent discussions, a conspiracy of exasperated shepherds scattering their flocks along the highways and byways, yet in reality it raised grave and vital issues of the relationship of Church and State, of the freedom or bondage of that Church, and of the position of equality or inequality of all other religious denominations. The position they had to face was that there was a Church by law established, a Church which received special protection and patronage from the State and in return submitted to a large, if not complete, measure of public control; and by the very fact that it was attempted to make it the Church of the nation, they condemned all other religious bodies to a less dignified and less favoured position, and created in their minds, unfortunately, a sense of grievous injustice. That practices went merrily forward, wholly at variance with the Book of Common Prayer, could not and indeed was not attempted to be denied; and were hon. Members in doubt, they would be convinced by the floods of post cards and coloured pictures which looked like mediæval fashion plates, with which they had been inundated, embarrassing to members, but refreshing to the heart of the Postmaster-General. Nor was it denied that the bishops already possessed the necessary powers, did they wish to enforce them, which would amply meet the situation. But they did not; and it was there at the first time of asking, in its most elementary form, that Parliamentary control broke down, for the bishops, appointed by Parliament presumably for spiritual reasons, could not or dared not enforce spiritual laws, which were their own special grievance, while at all times showing a sinister zeal in interfering in another place with the temporal laws or Bills of this House. With no desire to embitter discussion, he would content himself by saying that this incursion of bishops into temporal matters was one of the most deplorable and melancholy incidents of a vicious system. How a clergyman, in the performance of these practices, could break his most solemn ordination oaths, must be left to him to reconcile with his own conscience, which should be the sole judge; and how far he was fitted, after committing an act which, as a mere lay witness, would bring him within the clutch of the law, to stand up as a teacher of truth and justice, was a matter which must be left to the discretion and judgment of his congregation. The remedy for this was not penal repression, but by disestablishment to create a Free Church, where lay opinion could make itself felt, and where religious life could grow and expand to satisfy the religious hopes and aspirations of her members. This Bill asked the House to retrace the steps of centuries, to set up an inquisition on a small scale, to deny the accumulated experience of the ages, and to fall back on methods of repression in matters of religious opinion which had failed, and rightly failed, in all generations and in all countries. And how was this task to be undertaken? The Bill proposed to fight this unequal battle with the aid of five gentlemen, seduced from an honourable profession by a bait of £8,000 a year. If he knew anything of his countrymen, it would be better before they began operations to ascertain from the War Office the number of troops that could be put at their disposal. He ventured to suggest to the House to look with a jealous eye on coercive methods, when the true and natural development of civil and religious institutions was on the lines of freedom. Much of the trouble in this world was caused by the vigorous administration of wrong principles and, perhaps, more by the fear of carrying a just principle to its proper conclusion. Test and Corporation Acts stimulated Nonconformity, and the barbarous laws against Catholics made a whole nation cling yet more closely to their faith. There was still in force an Act to compel attendance at church on Sunday on penalty of 1s. fine, and, human nature being what it is, they had only to actively enforce it to empty every church in the land. The argument he wished to present to the House was this: The State, as such, had no sort or kind of control or concern with matters of religion, which were affairs of the conscience; and those who held these views could in no way support a Bill which had for its object, though it would certainly fail, the perpetuation of the existing relationship of Church and State. He would plead not for less, but for more freedom. Nor could there be peace in this land until they completely severed the connection of Church and State, leaving religious affairs to the individual, and temporal affairs only to the State. A great number of members of the Established Church were smarting under the indignity of Parliamentary control, and a vast number of other religious communities were smarting under the knowledge of the privileged position which flowed from State patronage. He believed that by the law of the land every British subject in the United Kingdom was a member of the Established Church, and yet that was so far disregarded in practice that a Nonconformist was refused burial in a churchyard for fear his very dust should contaminate the true members. Yet it was to this House, composed of scores of Nonconformists, of Catholics, of members of all accepted and unaccepted forms of belief, that the Church must turn for any alteration of her service and ritual; it was this House which ultimately directed her belief and controlled her destiny. To men of sincere conviction and sensitive temper, he could imagine no servitude more degrading, no condition more galling; nor did he think that this humiliation would have been tolerated for a moment, were it not that disendowment was an essential feature of disestablishment. He asked the House in the generosity of its spirit to free the Church from every vestige of State interference and control, and to let her develop according to the wishes of her members. In doing that, not only would they be still following a precedent crowned with the proved value of experience, but at the same time, by removing the inequality and injustice felt by Nonconformists, they would have travelled a long way on the road to Protestant unity. In that earnest spirit he commended the Amendment to the House.

*COLONEL R. WILLIAMS (Dorsetshire, W.) said he desired in the first place to congratulate the hon. Member who had just spoken on his very successful first speech — a speech in which he had championed the cause which his father championed before him with great success during the time he represented Bradford. But he would like to correct one mistake into which the hon. Member had fallen when speaking of the regulation as to the burial of Nonconformists in churchyards. He believed the prohibition was entirely done away with by the Act of 1870. They had listened to two very remarkable speeches that afternoon dealing with very different sides of this question—speeches by the hon. Members for West Ham and for Leicester, but before he dealt with them or with the Bill before the House he would like as a strong Churchman, on what was called the evangelical side, who might be thought to be in hearty accord with the Bill, to explain his position. Although he realised quite as much as the mover of the Bill the extreme danger of the views which were openly preached and spoken, and of the doctrines inculcated and of the practices followed by certain sections of the Church of England, he thought the hon. Gentleman had fallen into the mistake of confounding the views of the extremists with those of the immense mass of Churchmen who were loyal to the Reformation settlement. He had for many years made it a quarrel with his moderate High Church friends that they had not long ago taken steps to free themselves from connection with the extreme section, and that they had not made it quite clear that those extreme doctrines were not widely or largely held and were not viewed by them with favour. That was the platform on which he stood when he spoke against the Bill, which seemed to him to violate all the canons which ought to prevail when formulating legislation of that sort. The mover of the Bill went back to the Reformation times for the framework of his measure, to the 1 Eliz., cap. 1, and to the Court of High Commission. Originally the Commissions were addressed to archbishops, bishops, doctors in the law and other persons of learning; they were always addressed to men of standing and position very different from those who were to constitute the new Courts and who were to be required to be of much the same *status* as County Court Judges appointed by the Lord Chancellor. Those who carried their researches back would find that this Court of High Commission set up by Elizabeth was abolished by the Long Parliament, as also was the Star Chamber, for the reason that in each Court, in degrees more or less oppressive, the Judge's discretion was the law—a discretion which Lord Clarendon, writing at the time, said "hath been the quicksand swallowing up their property and their liberty." This Bill entirely ignored the power of the bishops in the last instance and for the first time it conferred upon lay Judges the right of inhibition and of deprivation; the practice under the present law, when an appeal was heard in the Law Courts from a decision of the Ecclesiastical Court being for the Court not itself to inhibit or deprive but to remit the case back to the Archbishops' or Bishops' Court with a direction to that Court to do so. Therefore the Bill infringed what had always been recognised as a spiritual function of the bishop or archbishop with regard to these matters. It was said that the offences enumerated in the third schedule had been made illegal by the Courts. Did not the hon. Gentleman remember that the greatest difficulty in all these matters was that those Courts themselves were not accepted by a large body of the clergy? Whether they were right or wrong in that it was not his purpose to argue, but it was due to the feeling that the fountain of the King's justice in matters ecclesiastical should flow through channels ecclesiastical, and not simply through channels purely and wholly secular. If it was said that whatever the law was it ought to be obeyed, that came with an ill grace from Gentlemen opposite who were already proposing to alter the education laws to meet one set of consciences and were agitating to repeal altogether the vaccination laws to meet another set of consciences, and who also in Ireland were saying that if people did not choose to obey the ordinary Courts the ordinary Courts would not very much trouble themselves and they would not use any fresh powers to put them into effect. But they must not lose sight of the fact that there was this conscientious objection to these Courts, and that one of the very recommendations of the Commission to which reference had been made was that there should be an earnest attempt made to devise a Court which should administer the King's justice both on its ecclesiastical and on its secular side,—a Court which ought to be accepted by those who were now objecting to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Courts as at present established for these ecclesiastical cases. But having entirely ignored that feature, the Bill proceeded to enumerate a very long list of ornaments, etc., which it declared to be illegal. Reference had been made by the mover to the inaction of the bishops and of the Church. He would like to correct one statement made by the hon. Member for Leicester that the Church came to Parliament to ask for this Bill. That was not the case. No official exponent of the Church's views had ever asked for this Bill or anything like it. It was said that the Church and the bishops had done nothing. He held it would be found on the contrary that since this Commission reported the bishops had done a very great deal, and if they searched through the land for the churches where the things that had been mentioned were being carried on in defiance of the bishop's wishes, the House would be astonished at the smallness of the number that there were. They all had reason to know many cases in which the bishops had taken quiet action, and in which these practices had been dropped. He had known personally friends of his own who had themselves dropped what they held very dear. He knew one church where the children's communion was entirely dropped at the request of the bishop not without a great deal of difficulty of conscience on the part of the incumbent. One of the recommendations of the Ritual Commissioners was that letters of business should be asked for to enable the Church in Convocation to examine into these matters. He fully agreed with what had been said as to Convocation not being as representative as it ought to be and the House of Laymen not being an integral part of the governing body of the Church itself as it ought to be and it must be in a very few years. There again he would like to correct a misstatement made by the mover of the Bill that the House of Laymen was elected on a very limited franchise. On the contrary, one of the very first things which the Representative Church Council did was to frame a very wide basis for the election to the House of Laymen. It was not possible to hold in every parish a contested election, each member having a parish or group of parishes as his constituency, but every member of the House of Laymen had been first sent up by his own diocesan body on a broad and comprehensive basis, and then by that body to the House of Laymen. He would like a broader basis still, but the basis was already broad. The Prime Minister felt himself obliged by precedent to grant those letters of business, and therefore the party to which he (the Prime Minister) belonged was pledged to wait till the report of Convocation. These things in the third schedule were held up as part of Romish teaching. There was no doubt that some of the clergy used them as a part of Romish teaching and with the deliberate intention of getting as near the Church of Rome as they could—a practice to be deprecated as strongly as possible and one to be removed as soon as possible. It was part of the irony of fate that within a few days of this Bill being brought forward the first result of the letters of business should have appeared. A Committee of the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury had drawn up a historical sketch of the vestments by prelates of acknowledged learning who were perhaps the most able on the whole bench of bishops to give such a historical sketch, who could none of them be accused of being ultra-Protestant, and who told them with one voice that there was no doctrinal signification in any one of these things. There was simply a development of the ordinary civil dress of the time, even to the handkerchief which we should put in our pockets but which they used to carry over their arm. The symbolism attached to the dress dated from about the year 700, some of it as late as 1000 or 1200. This showed the unhistorical faculty and the disloyalty to the Church of England of those who said there was doctrinal signification. It showed the narrowness with which the Bill had been conceived, and it showed want of thought too, because the Commissioners under the Bill had no choice but to order the whole of those things to be removed. One of the most venerated spots in England was Westminister Abbey, but this Bill would have the holy table, which was of stone, removed from it. In Portland not very long ago in altering and enlarging the prison the Government built a new chapel and the holy table was made of stone. The chapel was built by the prisoners, the stone was the production of the island, and he thought the idea a good one, though, no doubt, strictly speaking it was illegal, and under this Bill it would have to be removed. But what were they to say about a further provision of the Bill in regard to costs? He complained of the source from which the money was to come. There was nothing said in olden days about paying costs when prosecutions could not be undertaken without the bishops. Those who wanted to put their hands into the pockets of the Commissioners had never offered to guarantee the bishops their costs if they would put the law into motion, and it was notorious that many prosecutions could have been taken under the old Act, but the bishop could not afford it. If hon. Members wanted these prosecutions they had better have put their hands in their pockets first of all. But he believed there were only two cases in which laymen had offered to guarantee the expenses of their bishop for a prosecution. They had already been told in the debate of cases costing £7,000, £11,000, £17,000. But let the House think what the revenues of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were and of the boon they had conferred on the Church within the last few months of being able to raise to something like a living wage the remuneration of a body of men working on almost starvation wages among a large population. This Bill proposed to take away their power of doing that, and to spend the money upon these prosecutions for offences which, though bad in themselves, were yet very few. There was a story of a great Bishop of London who refused to allow a clergyman to have some particular practice or something in his Church. The clergyman said: "Mr. So-and-so has one." The answer was "He works." They must have some sort of sympathy with that. They might not agree with all the methods of the Salvation Army, of ranters, of Nonconformist Free Churchmen, or with these ritualists, but in these days of secularism, when carelessness was growing all over the Church, it seemed a pitiful thing to bring forward a Bill to prosecute men who were doing this good work, and who, though they were preaching disloyal things, were still more preaching and living the same Gospel which hon. Members opposite themselves believed. This had been used as an argument for disestablishment, but the Bill was no argument for disestablishment. The hon. Member for Leicester had spoken of the House being the head of the secular part of the law, and having nothing to do with the ecclesiastical law. While the Church was established, he would remind Members, whatever might be their private opinion, whatever might be the particular form of religion in which they worshipped God, they had come into that House with the responsibility of managing to some extent [the

Church of England. That House was the ultimate Court in all these matters and therefore, Nonconformists though they might be, Secularists, Roman Catholics or Jews, one of the responsibilities they had assumed was that of helping forward the Church of England legislation as the Church of England desired. It was quite true that many of them wanted to be free from that responsibility and that there was a strong feeling in favour of disestablishment among a great many Nonconformists, though not all, because a great number knew perfectly well that with all her difficulties the Church of England was the real stay of sound doctrine in this country. Disestablishment would be the greatest blow at the maintenance of true doctrine that the land could ever have. He knew a good many hon. Members would say, "No" to that, but he knew some Members, and a great many Nonconformists outside, who would not. They had not said a word in that debate except as regarded disestablishment. They had said something as regarded the Church and disestablishment, but nothing as regarded the country and disestablishment. Of course, he was quite aware that the Amendment did not deal with the question of disendowment, but the hon. Member for Shipley had made it quite clear that if he voted for disestablishment he would vote for disendowment as well. Not a word had been said as yet upon the other side of the question. It had not been said that after all this nation had adopted a form of religion as its manifestation to the world that it was a religious nation with a religious basis for its laws. Nothing had been said about the loss which would accrue to the nation if it deliberately gave away the profession which it had made, and which was the reason for the adoption of disestablishment. Nothing had been said of the loss to religion if that form of compliance with that association with religion was given up by the State, or as to the moral loss to the State if it took away revenues which were not the State's and never had been, which were given not only for Church purposes, but in many instances for individual parochial purposes, which whatever their origin were at all events given for the maintenance of religion and the worship of God. He hoped he had made it abundantly clear why a great many of them who were loyal and evangelical members of the Church could not possibly vote for this Bill, and why on the other hand they could no more vote, for the sake of the Church or the State, for the Motion for disestablishment. He should not vote at all, and he thought some hon. Members opposite would be in the same position.

*SIR FRANCIS EDWARDS (Radnor) said the hon. Gentleman had reminded the House that nearly every hon. Member on the Ministerial side had been returned pledged to deal with the Established Church. That was the reason why he wanted to support this Amendment. He wished things so arranged that the House would have nothing to do with the management of the Church of England at all. That morning he had received an intimation that if he voted for this Amendment he would be voting for the Mass. He might retort that every vote given for the Bill was a vote given for the principle of an Established Church, and he was against that. The principle itself was the management of the Church of England by this House, and he was in favour of disestablishment which would allow the Church to manage its own affairs in the way it thought best. It had been said that the time was not ripe for disestablishment, but he supported this Amendment not merely as a politician who objected to a connection between Church and State, and not merely as a Nonconformist who justly resented the unfair privilege which was inherent in an Established Church. He represented a Welsh county, the majority of his constituents being Nonconformists, and he deeply sympathised with the grievance they had against the unfair privileges enjoyed by the Church of England. He himself was not a Nonconformist. He was a Churchman, and he wished to address himself to this Bill entirely from the standpoint of a Churchman who wanted to set the Church free from the crippling bonds of the State. From his own experience he was convinced that the power for good of the Church of England in Wales could never be properly and efficiently exercised until the Church ceased her connection with the State, and then the suspicions and prejudices created by that connection would be removed. He desired to see the Church free for the very purposes for which this Bill had been brought in, viz., to put down disorder. By disestablishing the Church they would do the best thing for putting down disorder and regulating the discipline of the Church. In that way they would produce a gradual co-operation between the laity of the Church and the clergy which would be more satisfactory than at present. As a Churchman he asked what benefit was the Establishment to the Church? The Church was a great instrument for spiritual good. Did the Establishment help or hinder the spiritual work of the Church? The introduction of this Bill was a sufficient answer to that question. Churchmen might differ as to what was good or bad for Church discipline, but in the words of the hon. Member for West Ham it was injurious to true religion that Church doctrine and Church dicipline should depend upon the caprice of men who were entirely outside the Church to which they professed to belong. This protest by Churchmen against the ritual was only the culmination of the attitude taken by the defenders of the Establishment, because the main reason for the Establishment was that the Church and the nation were co-extensive. They contended that the Parliamentary control of a National Church was just and reasonable, but many Churchmen resented that control. The fact that so many men were outside the Church showed that the Church of England had lost its title to be considered a National Church. Would disestablishment help or hinder the spiritual work of this country? The connection between Church and State was nowhere more apparent than in country places, and the vicar of a small country parish always owed more to the Church and the Establishment than the vicar of a parish in a large town. It was clear that the Church was more prosperous in large parishes than in country places. Why was this? Because in large towns the Church of England was practically as self-dependent as any of the free Churches. The Establishment hindered the true work of the Church. If this were true as a general proposition it was more essentially true of the Church in Wales. What was the position of the Church in the Principality to-day? Nobody would deny that the majority of the people of Wales were outside the Established Church. The majority in Wales had expressed their view constitutionally in the unprecedented fact that Wales sent up to this House a solid band of representatives every one of them pledged to the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century Wales was thoroughly Jacobite and Anglican, whereas to-day it was Radical and Nonconformist. That was largely due to the Establishment and its evil consequences. The history of the Church in Wales was the history of a Church whose life had been crushed out by the dead weight of the Establishment. As a Welshman he was rather pleased to read the remarks made by the Bishop of Norwich in his address at the Church Congress at Yarmouth in which he said—

> "It would not be justifiable if possible to bolster up the Church as an Establishment against the convictions and wishes of the people of England."

If they substituted in that quotation "Wales" for "England" then the Bishop had stated the case for Wales. He had great pleasure in supporting the Amendment.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): The speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down was a very satisfactory contribution to our debate, for he has stated his case in a thoroughly temperate manner, and in a way which will go straight to the hearts of many of his friends and fellow-countrymen. I will not, however, follow the hon. Member into the mazes of Welsh disestablishment, but when the time comes for discussing that subject we shall be ready to meet his arguments. There are, of course, two sides to the question of the Church in Wales. There is such a thing as a minority in Wales, and unless my information is fallacious the strength of that minority is increasing and will some day reach a figure which will require to be dealt with. We cannot settle great and important constitutional questions in this way. With regard to the question of disestablishment it has been raised in the middle of a discussion on an entirely different matter. I contend that it is possible to find a middle course on the one hand. Some say: "We do not like the interference with the Church by the State." On the other hand, others say: "I want the State to regulate the affairs of the Church." Is it not possible that the Church may have a larger measure of self-regulation conceded to it and at the same time retain the ultimate control of the State? Is that not a conceivable solution of a very great and important matter? I would commend that to the consideration of the House, and I hope hon. Gentlemen will give it their attention. But turning to this Bill it seems to me to contain a lamentable amount of impatience and intolerance. I know the question has attained a very considerable position now in advance of what it obtained in former times. As a member of the Royal Commission which investigated this question, perhaps the House will allow me to recall a few of the important facts bearing upon it, because I think they ought to be borne in mind before the House comes to a conclusion. They have already been referred to, but perhaps the House will allow me to emphasise one or two points in connection with the Report of that Commission. I heard the hon. Member opposite cast some slur on the composition of that Commission. Of course it is not for me as a member of that Commission to discuss that point, but I may state that I have heard a similar complaint made by the ritualistic party. The truth is that the Commission was intended to be a body composed of reasonable men occupying no extreme position and advocating no extreme views. I will venture to say that a very remarkable amount of learning was possessed by many members of that Commission, and their Report ought to be a very valuable factor in arriving at any conclusion. With regard to the extent of the evils complained of, I would like to make a quotation from page 76 of the Report of that Commission, where it says—

> "The complaints made to us relate to a small proportion of the 14,242 churches in England and Wales and they vary greatly in their character and gravity. To preclude an impression which would, we believe, be unjust to the body of the clergy, we desire to place on record our conviction that the evidence gives no justification for any doubt that in the large majority of parishes the work of the Church of England is being quietly and diligently performed by clergy who are entirely loyal to the principles of the English Reformation as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer."

That throws a considerable light upon the discussion of this Bill. In the face of that is it worth while, even if it is admitted that a small minority are guilty of the practices complained of, to pass a Bill to put down what is admitted to be an excess of zeal in a small number of parishes? To accomplish that, is it worth while to disturb the whole peace of the Church? In a great majority of the parishes of which complaint was made to the Royal Commission, the complainants were not residents in the parish. The complaints did not come from the parishioners, but from persons who were sent to those parishes to investigate and report. It is worth observing that one of the difficulties of regulating what are called ritualistic excesses is that you have not to deal with the clergy alone, but also with the laity and the congregations. I heard of a case the other day in which a clergyman who was unwilling to be brought into line had behind him in that attitude a large body of laity and a very enthuisastic congregation who showed their enthusiasm by contributing to the Church expenses, and who were very unwilling that any change should be made to regulate the excesses complained of. That is another thing worth mentioning as showing that the difficulties in all these cases are very great. It is easy in this House and outside of it to draw a lurid picture of the excessive ceremonial which is going on and the attempt to adopt Romish doctrines and Romish ornaments, but when you come to deal with the thing in individual parishes you are met by these local personal obstacles. Therefore, it is a great mistake to suppose that all this is being done by the clergy in the teeth of the laity, because there is undoubtedly a certain amount of lay Church opinion which is in favour of the practices of which this Bill complains. Now let me pass to the recommendations which the Royal Commission have made. The Report says:—

> "Letters of business should be issued to the Convocations with instructions (*a*) to consider the preparation of a new rubric regulating the ornaments (that is the vesture) of the ministers of the Church at the time of their ministrations with a view to its enactment by Parliament; and (*b*) to frame with a view to their enactment by Parliament, such modifications in the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the Ornaments and fittings of the Church as may tend to secure greater elasticity which a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand."

It has been held here that all departures from the law of the Church of England are on one side, and that there has been no such thing as departure by defect, carelessness, or indifference. I would remind the House that on all these lines there is a departure from the practice of the Church, and justice demands that there should be some equal treatment all round. The Commissioners to be appointed under this Bill are to go round the country and investigate every church to see whether the laws of the Church of England are being absolutely obeyed, and where they are not being observed. They are to go round to these places on their own motion, and wherever they find an excess or negligence of the laws of the Church they are to come down upon that church, and bring the clergymen before the authorities, and if he does not obey the laws of the Church he is to be deprived of his living. The whole thing is so much beyond all reason that I apologise to the House for dwelling upon it. There was another recommendation of the Royal Commission which says—

> "The recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission in 1883 as to the constitution of the Diocesan and Provincial Courts and of the Court of Final Appeal should be carried into effect with one modification."

I am not going into the thorny question of the Ecclesiastical Courts. I know that the Supreme Court of Appeal does not commend itself to the judgment of the clergy of the Church, and they say it was forced upon the Church by the State without the Church being consulted in the matter, and for that reason they decline to accept its authority. So long as there is a large number of persons in the Church who take that view, so long will it be impossible to enforce the law on the Church. Until you can satisfactorily reconstitute the final Court of Appeal it will never commend itself to the consciences of Churchmen, and you will never get that obedience to the laws of the Church which we all desire. With regard to one of these recommendations something was said this afternoon. I do not wish to make any charge against the Government; what I have to say is entirely in their favour. They have granted the letters of business which the Royal Commission recommended, and so long as these letters of business are running, and so long as these matters are under their consideration, it seems to me idle for the House of Commons to step in and interfere and to say what will not be the law of the Church. The Convocation must have this respect paid to them, that so long as they are the existing body recognised by the State and the Government, so long, I say, we must wait until these letters of business are acted upon, and you will not be paying proper respect to the gentlemen appointed, unless you wait to see what they say. I do not stand here to minimise or to ignore in any way the evils or irregularities which have been pointed out in debate. I have never apologised for, nor have I sanctioned any of the what are called illegal practices. I have always taken the line of saying, "Till you can show that the things complained of are strictly within the law of the Church it is much better not to practice them." No one who listened to the speech of the hon. Member for West Ham could have failed to be struck not only with the ability, but the very lofty tone in which that speech was expressed. His attitude towards the Church of England was one of respect, and he paid absolute respect to the opinions of those who differed from him. But the hon. Gentleman seemed to me to make a long step in advance when he indicated that rather than have these matters of discipline discussed in the secular atmosphere, which was painful to him and his friends, he would prefer to cut the knot, and at once sever the connection between Church and State. I know that I differ in that respect from the majority of the House of Commons, but personally I should intensely regret the severance of the Church of England from the State. The connection between Church and State in England is one of the most ancient parts of the British Constitution; it is more ancient even than the House of Commons. I think the people of England would be very unwilling to consent to a severance of that connection—a severance which would weaken the forces that make for better Government and better moral and social well-being of the people. But I go beyond this, because I believe it is matter of common knowledge that disestablishment of the Church involves also disendowment. Those who would vote for disendowment would be doing a grievous wrong, and a grievous wrong especially to the poorest classes. The revenues of the Church of England are in the aggregate large, but when you take the sums paid to individual holders of offices, it cannot be said that they are unduly large. I think the endowments of the Church of England do more good to the whole community than almost any other form of expenditure that we could devise. Through the means of these endowments it has been provided that there shall be one, often more than one, to whom the deepest interests of the most needy members of the community are committed. I know that there are sometimes painful exceptions. I know that in former times the Church often failed to carry out its duties. But I think the improvement and progress we have seen in the character and standard of the Church deserve always to be recognised. At the present time we can see that in the vast majority of parishes the endowments of the Church of England provide someone to minister not only to the highest but to the lowest, to the needs of the poorest and most needy. If I am right in that, I cannot be a party to doing anything to diminish those resources that minister to the poor, or to do a grievous wrong to the most needy in the land. To the supporters of this Bill I wish to say that there is something much better than compulsion. Compulsion, no doubt, is necessary when you are dealing with evil-doers, persons who are absolutely determined to break the law and prey upon the community. When you come upon a class of that kind you are bound to exercise the rigours of the law with a view to saving society. But the men who are really at the bar this afternoon are not evil-doers, but men who think that by straining ecclesiastical law they will make more attractive the doctrine and discipline of the Church. They may be wrong. Very likely they are wrong. They may have acted foolishly, but are they to be compelled by Act of Parliament, or by Commissioners appointed under Act of Parliament. Are you going to arrive at a conclusion by means of that sort? Surely we can do something better than that. We can strengthen the hands of the rulers of the Church and try to persuade rather than compel. If Parliament and the country would set themselves to that work, and and if they would try to persuade rather than coerce, and try to use the forces that make for peace rather than those which make for destruction and division, I am sure it would be a much stronger step for the settlement of the difficulties of the Church of England, and a much nobler step for the advancement of the spiritual welfare of the country than the passing of such a Bill as this.

*MR. MASSIE (Wiltshire, Cricklade) said he agreed with the Amendment in its general and practical issue. But as in the Amendment which appeared on the Paper in his name, he desired to emphasise certain concurrent issues to which prominence had not been given. He had some reason to believe that the opinion of the mover of the Amendment in favour of the liberation of the Church from the State involved as a consequence partial disendowment. But he had not said so in his Amendment, and he did not say so in his speech. The hon. Member admitted that the existence of ecclesiastical disorders was weakening the Church, and, therefore, he presumed was hampering the Church in the discharge of the spiritual functions devolving upon it. But the hon. Member had not admitted them in bulk as lawlessness, and at any rate he had not said this in his Amendment. On behalf of himself and those who agreed with him, he desired to make these two issues clear. While he did so, he agreed heartily with the Member for West Ham that no machinery for coercion by the State in matters of conscience could be made effective. Such machinery would only aggravate disloyalty into rebellion, and would only add largely to the contingent of sympathisers. Acts having the same end in view had in the past entirely failed. They had done worse; they had fostered that which they were designed to kill, from the Act of Uniformity in 1662 down to the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. The Act of Uniformity turned the Church of England into a sect, and made Nonconformity, which, whatever might be said against it, was so strong in these days that it now comprised something like half the religious population of the country. The Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 was designed to put down ritualism. What had been its concrete effect? During the thirty years after it was passed, five disobedient clergymen retired from their livings. Two of these went over to Rome, but the other three obtained clerical positions in other dioceses. From three curates licences were withdrawn, and these instantly found clerical occupation elsewhere. The imprisonment of Mr. Green and Mr. Enraght made these two gentlemen martyrs, and made recruiting in their cause much easier. These gentlemen went to prison because they would not plead before the Court of Arches whose jurisdiction they did not recognise. Was it at all likely that a Commission of ex-judges, and of barristers of not less than ten years standing would secure more acceptableness? These clergymen were arraigned because of illegalities in ceremonies, vestments, emblems, and teaching. Was it in the least likely that the scheduling in this Bill of the materials for similar illegalities was likely to secure fuller obedience? The organ of the High Party, *The Church Times*, assured any man who believed that a Commission or Court similar to such as had previously existed would secure allegiance that he was entirely mistaken. If the estimate was correct there was something like 3,000 churches throughout England and Wales implicated in these illegalities. He did not wish the House to suppose that he was in sympathy in the least with these transgressors. The clergy of the Church of England held positions of prestige and emolument under State Church conditions, and they could not properly fling away the conditions and retain the positions and emoluments. They could not pick and choose the laws they would observe or the Courts they would obey. Let them surrender their positions and emoluments, and then let them have freedom, either in the Church of Rome, so far as that Church would permit it, or finding support outside of both these Churches, so far as social order allowed. Common sense was entirely against the idea that a man might enjoy special favour of the State, and at the same time flout the State's legal and judicial representatives, whether spiritual or temporal. He had not to go far for a specimen of this paradoxical situation. Almost within bow shot of his own house there was a parish which a lawless priest had turned upside down, as was well known to the bishop, and to the chancellor of the diocese, who was a distinguished Member of this House. Originally a chaplain in an Anglican convent in the South, some eight years ago he was presented to the living by the lady who held the advowson, under promise that he would not interfere with the services as they had been previously conducted, with which services the parish had been perfectly satisfied. But after two years of possession, when he was more or less firmly in the saddle, he began a series of progressive changes which attained the dimensions of a revolution, and the effect of a parochial explosion. He was guilty of illegalities as to ceremonies, vestments, emblems and teaching which had been classed by the Royal Commission among serious illegalities, and which the same Commission described as intended to assimilate the services of the Church of England to those of the Church of Rome. But he still retained the position and emoluments which ought to depend upon obedience. That was a curious study in ritualistic casuistry. But there was another side; it was a curious study also in ethics. The bishop instituted a suit against this clergyman, but the suit was abandoned on account of promises which the clergyman made. These promises, as appeared from the evidence before the Royal Commission, were afterwards broken. The chancellor of the diocese in the Consistory Court ordered him to take down the pictures at the Stations of the Cross, but, within a year after the pictures were taken down there were fourteen texts substituted for the pictures, and the processions went on just the same; and the clergyman sought opportunity to hold what might be called snatch services, when he thought he would not be watched. He was ordered by the same Court to give up the use of incense in the parish church, but the apparatus for the incense remained and the smell of incense was afterwards detected for a time after the services had commenced. It was intended by the use of incense about ten minutes before the service began to let people see when they came into church that incense was used. But there was something worse. What had been the result of all this upon the parish? The clergyman's congregation had practically left him. The congregation numbered about a score and at a crowded vestry meeting he could only secure eighteen supporters. The bishop at his own expense had found a chaplain to conduct services at a chapel of ease, which was always full. There was no church work going on in the parish—no visiting of homes or of schools. There were no district visitors and there were no clubs or societies. He was bound to think that it was this clergyman's conscience which drove him to expel his congregation and to neglect his parish, but it was a conscience which he did not profess to understand, because it was not ethical, it was only ceremonial. A Bill like that now before the House might act very well in this particular case by deprivation, because the clergyman's following in the parish was so small; and deprivation would be absolutely just. But he feared, judging from past circumstances, that he would ingeniously slip out of one illegality into another and back again, a ritualistic Proteus *manque*. He did not believe that this clergyman would be regarded as a martyr. It was the congregation that had been the martyr; and in his view it would be far better to leave the congregation to deal with him. But there were clergymen belonging to the same school, absolutely devoted and hard working, so warmly beloved by their parishioners that they had a free hand in regard to ceremonies and the use of emblems and vestments. In fact they had leave to do what they liked. If there were deprivation in cases like these there would be something like civil war in these parishes; and if he were a Machiavelli in his advocacy of disestablishment this would be exactly the Bill that he would like to see passed. Such devoted, earnest ritualists with large and equally devoted congregations behind them would break the back of the most just law; and it was the effectiveness of the law and not its justice that they had to consider that afternoon. What, then, would have to be done? As Englishmen and as citizens of a Protestant country, they could not allow the State to be dragged after such men on their way to Rome—the State giving them and continuing to them their prestige and their emoluments to speed them on their way to Rome and to help them to take their people with them. Yet, differing though he did, almost by a whole heaven from some of these men as to the genius of Christianity and the genius of Christian worship, he maintained that there must be room for them, but certainly not in a State Church. Separate the Church from the State, and then the State was no more responsible for that Church or for the divisions and sections of that Church than it was for any other ecclesiastical organisation. There had been attempts recently made in certain ecclesiastical organs to prove that the dissenting bodies were as much established by law as the Church of England. Well, commonsense and facts would have no truck with such a *quasi*-legal sophistication. Permission to live, protection by the law, by the police, and by the regulations of social order, freedom to believe and to act according to one's belief at one's own expense, and freedom even to hold Church property were all very different things from establishment by law; and any contention to the opposite must be regarded by ordinary men as mere futility. He and those who agreed with him said, "Let the Church be set absolutely free." But if the Church were to be free, the

Church must pay the price of freedom. It must give up the patronage and support of the State. They could not cut the painter and carry off the cargo along with them. The precedent of the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland—though that Church was not disendowed enough —not of the Church of Scotland, must be followed. The Church of Scotland had practically become a sect with power to manage its own affairs; and he knew that Mr. Gladstone had entirely dissented from that arrangement. The Church of England in the case of disestablishment should not take with it such property as could be proved to be national property. Not only jurists but bishops had admitted that a large portion of the property now possessed by the Church of England was national. Such national property as had been appropriated to her or by her as a portion only of the nation should be taken for purposes of general charity or beneficence about which there was little or no difference of opinion. And they must persistently remember that the tithe was an arrangement not only for the clergy but also for the poor. Let such property be used to assuage poverty, to dispel ignorance; and anyone who called that the secularising of the property of a religious body both misunderstood the nature and tenure of such property and failed to distinguish between secular and sacred, holy and profane. Such disendowment as was involved in disestablishment need inflict no injury upon any Church. After the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland bishops and archbishops and devoted church laymen united to say that the gain far outweighed the loss. One right hon. Gentleman, whose name was remembered with affection and reverence in this House even by those who differed from him and fought him on political questions—he referred to the late Colonel Saunderson—said in a speech delivered in Dublin on 7th October, 1898—

> "The Irish Church received, as we thought, a very sad blow twenty-three years ago, when it was disestablished and disendowed. Although I voted against that measure at the time, yet if I could I would now undo that vote, for I believe that the Irish Church is stronger and more spiritual than ever it was before."

Let them get rid of the notion that the Church and the clergy were identical. Give the laity power in their own Church. The laity in the main had learned toleration by practice. They knew by daily experience what it was to work for the common good with those who differed from them. The laity, if given the power which they ought to have, would find a way by which there would be room for the preferences of different sections, and they would know how to restrain the eccentricities of individual clergymen by the practical method of stopping supplies. He did not say that there would be perfect peace. Unfortunately, in ecclesiastical regions that could not be; but there would be more peace. There would be no domination of parishes by individual clergymen. There would be no benefices absolute freeholds. The bishops of the disestablished and disendowed Church owing their honourable position to their own people would rule with the people behind them. The clergy obtaining their position and emoluments and holding them by the goodwill of those whom they served would continue in their honourable position by virtue of high character and spiritual efficiency. The Church would no longer vex the State and the State would no longer vex the Church, as each unimpeded by the other would fulfil the duties of the station to which it had been called.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said it was one of the vicissitudes of their debates that, owing to the procedure of the House, when one set of Members introduced one subject another set of Members could compel them to discuss another subject in which the first set were not interested. However, he made no complaint of that; all was fair in religion and politics. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had, towards the close of his speech, wandered off into disestablishment, and had pursued with curious vision the destiny and fortunes of the Church which he was so anxious to disestablish. He gave them a forecast of its future position when disestablished, so detailed, so precise, and so alluring, that he was sure members of the Church of England owed the hon. Gentleman a deep debt of gratitude. He had listened to the mover and seconder of the Amendment with great interest and he desired to join in the compliment paid to them for the terms and spirit in which the Amendment was moved. He could not help envying the position intellectually in which they stood. They got rid, or thought they got rid, of all thorny topics, and they provided a solution of this question so symmetrical, so logical, so fair, and, above all, so remote that they felt at liberty to discuss it in general terms without any danger of galvanising it into one of the practical living problems of the hour. It was quite hopeless on their part to endeavour to induce the House to take up the position of Gallio who drove the contentious Jews from his judgment seat. He had always thought the attitude of Gallio, even if adopted by the House, was singularly unfortunate as a historical precedent, because Gallio, whilst declaring as a Roman that he cared for none of these miserable theological disputes, and drove the Jews away, did not get rid at all of the disturbance, because the Jews returned, and they brought with them the ruler of the Synagogue and beat him, and created a great deal more disturbance for Gallio than he had to contend with in the first instance. Therefore he did not think that his hon. friends were well advised in assuring the House that by entering gaily upon a measure for disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England they were going to get rid for all time of theological controversy. His hon. friend the Member for West Ham said he only suggested it, and he quoted Mr. Gladstone, but Mr. Gladstone also said that the fortunes of Church and State in this country were so linked together that if he were called upon to disunite them he would not know where to begin, and that in the event of the total separation of Church and State he conceived that nothing would be left but a lacerated and bleeding mass. Therefore, he thought it was impossible for his hon. friends—his hon. friend the Member for West Ham, who approached the question as a Churchman, and his hon. friend the Member for Leicester whom he would only recognise as having no interest whatever in the Church of England from the personal point of view—he did not conceive that either of these two hon. Gentlemen was going to lead the House into a paradise of peace and freedom by inducing it to embark upon the long and stormy controversy which would be aroused by the disestablishment of the Church of England. He asked the House to consider what was the position in this country as between Church and State with which they were confronted. The Member for Oxford University had referred to the historical partnership between Church and State which had so long existed. The right hon. Gentleman was perfectly justified in dwelling upon its importance historically, but he did not lay sufficient stress upon the fact that since the Reformation the terms of that partnership had been embodied in written documents, the Prayer Book, and the Articles of the Church. These documents had been solomnly registered, and had had the adherence of both Parliament and the Houses of Convocation. They constituted—as far as between a secular and a spiritual society a partnership could be constituted—the terms of the partnership which established the Church in this country, and the position which the Royal Commission had emphatically pronounced to be beyond dispute was that in many instances in a spirit of defiant lawlessness the terms of that partnership had been repudiated by clergy holding their benefices and their emoluments by a Parliamentary title. The Royal Commission reported that in a large number of the services of Holy Communion vestments, illegal lights, incense, wafers, and other practices had united to change the outward character from that of the traditional service of the Reformed English Church to that of the traditional service of the Church of Rome.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) asked the hon. Gentleman to continue the quotation.

*MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR read the remainder of the passage, which stated that a large number of members of the Church of England claimed that many of these things took their rise before the introduction of the Roman abuses, and honestly believed them to be in accordance with the teaching of the

Prayer Book and the law of the Church of England, as in their view it ought to be declared. Reference had been made to the report of the bishops just issued to Convocation, to the effect that vestments had no doctrinal significance whatever—and he did not at all impugn the statements of many of the clergy that they were sincerely convinced that this was so—but if these practices had no doctrinal significance, why was there this eager desire to introduce them? They were unknown after the Reformation for nearly 300 years, and it was only within the last sixty years that anything like even a partial adoption of these practices had taken place in the Church of England. And when they had been adopted, as the Royal Commission truly said, by an organised combination of large bodies of clergy and laity, whose aim had been expressed by their leader, Lord Halifax, in no doubtful terms, no unsophisticated mind could doubt that they had for their object the assimilation of the practices and discipline of the Church of England to that of the Church of Rome. Any Bill on this subject must necessarily lay itself open to criticism in detail, but the promoters of this Bill asserted in the teeth of the Amendment that the time had arrived when the House should define its position. If the Amendment were carried, the House would be thrown back upon an academic expression of opinion in favour of disestablishment, which it registered last session, and which would gain nothing by being again registered that afternoon. He submitted to those who opposed the Bill that as between the Church and State, whether they approved the machinery of the Bill or not, the State was within its right in formulating the terms on which it might continue the Establishment. The essence of this Bill, to his mind, was not its machinery for enforcing the law; it was the schedule which, taking certain practices as symbolical and typical of the shifting of the centre of gravity in the National Church in a direction which was never contemplated by the Reformation, challenged the Church of England in its corporate capacity to say whether or not it intended to remain a Protestant foundation or to revert again to the mediæval usage before the Reformation. The machinery of the Bill was a matter for Committee, and, whatever opinions were held on that subject, he urged that Parliament, as the trustee for a Protestant State, confronted with a Church reeling back into mediævalism, should place a plain issue before the Houses of Convocation. Whatever might have been the attitude of the Prime Minister, or the Crown as advised by him, the House was within its rights in not leaving Convocation to wait for a Parliament more favourably disposed to high Anglican contentions, but in laying down the terms on which the Establishment was to stand or fall whilst there was a Parliament which, as he believed, faithfully reflected the Protestant sentiment of the country. The hon. Member for Leicester had taunted members of the Church of England for coming there to a secular body in respect to theological opinions and for a remedy for their grievances, but he owned himself that he knew nothing about the Church of England. What did he know about it? Why he came from Scotland and was a member of the Free Church, and of all the unhappy instances of freedom he could not have instanced one worse than that Free Church which possessed spiritual freedom and yet had to come to this House to receive a Parliamentary endowment of its property, of which it had been despoiled by the secular arm. But the Free Church of Scotland had powers of self-government, and the laity were fully equipped with spiritual jurisdiction. What, therefore, did the hon. Member know of a Church in which every clergyman had a freehold and in which the layman was a nullity? Most of the practices mentioned in the schedule grouped themselves round the most solemn rite of the Christian religion. They were connected with the service of the Holy Communion and he, with many others, in the Church of England, felt it a burning hardship that at the autocratic caprice of a clergyman, they should be deprived or threatened to be deprived, of having the most sacred rite of their religion administered to them with that plainness and that simplicity to which for generations before them their Church had been accustomed. If the promoters had another remedy they would not trouble this House; but it was useless for their opponents to meet the promoters with an academic Motion in favour of disestablishment. Whether the House liked it or not, it was the joint trustee for the Church of England, and while that Church remained established Parliament had to discharge its duty in seeing that the terms of the compact upon which that establishment was based were faithfully and loyally adhered to.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): I rise to refer to a point which was not mentioned by my hon. friend the Member for the Kirkdale division in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, but which, nevertheless, is a point of more importance, to my mind, than a question of mere machinery. I refer to Clause 13 which charges the expenses, which I am afraid must be looked forward to as very heavy, for the administration of this Bill upon the funds in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. I want to know whether that clause is machinery, and whether if it is not mere machinery we can look for it that the promoters of this Bill will consent to its being dropped in Committee. For, without some security of that kind, I must say with a great many other Members, I cannot support this Bill. Perhaps I may be permitted to give the House some few figures which show the result of the clause. There are now 1,491 benefices in the Church of England with incomes of less than £100 a year, the average net value being £67 a year. Supposing we sought to raise these benefices to the bare living wage of £150 a year, we should require an annual sum of £123,000 to be provided. This House may have read lately of the recent proposals of Ecclesiastical Commissioners who promised to deal by exceptional grants with a great many of these poor livings, but even after these amounts have been exhausted, and everything that can be given is given in that direction, they will be able to provide for only one-half, and there will, I am informed, remain a deficit of at least £60,000 a year which must be raised, before a large number of livings with these wretched stipends receive any assistance whatever. Coming to the expenses for the working of the Bill, there is a sum of £8,000 a year to be spent in salaries alone, and when we hear the figures which the hon. Member for Kirkdale read in his speech in proposing the Second Reading, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the figures may at a moderate estimate rise to £20,000 a year. What is the purpose at present defined by Statute for the allocation of the funds in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners? It is to give assistance for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required. I am afraid that to me that purpose still remains a great deal more sacred than most others, and I want to know whether we are to be told to-day by the promoters of this Bill that by an unflinching attitude on this question, they prefer those poor parishes to go altogether without spiritual care and assistance, rather than allow a single parish to remain with a disloyal clergyman in it. If they do so, I cannot follow them in that attitude, and I have no doubt the very wealthy persons who are promoting this Bill will be able to provide funds for the working of it. At any rate, I submit to the House that if it undertakes the duty of walking the police authority up the aisle of a church, for the purpose of restoring the order it wishes to see reign there, the State itself ought to provide the funds, and not provide them at the expense of the Church. I hope my hon. friend will not remain silent on this point.

*MR. CHARLES MCARTHUR: In reply to the question of my right hon. friend, I think the view of the promoters of the Bill is that Clause 13 is a matter of detail to be dealt with in Committee, though I would say it is a very necessary detail, because the Bill cannot be carried into effect without money; but whether the money is to be found by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners out of their funds, or by the State, or in some other way, of course, it is impossible to say.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: Which way will the hon. Gentleman himself vote in the Committee?

*MR. CHARLES MCARTHUR: I think it is premature to answer that question.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: I do not agree.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) hoped it would not be considered out of place if he intervened in the debate, because, unlike many hon. Members in that portion of the House he was an Anglican, and he was not, moreover, ashamed to call himself a ritualist. Unfortunately, he did not hear part of the speech of the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, but he gathered, from what he did hear of that speech and from addresses by other supporters of the Bill, that they were curiously shy of talking about it. Therefore, perhaps, before he went on to general considerations he might be permitted to direct the attention of the House to one or two clauses of the Bill. He would like to point out, in the first place, that while the promoters of the Bill in the Memorandum told them that it was directed merely against certain practices, all of which had been adjudicated upon and declared to be illegal by the Courts, they found it necessary in Clause 17 to declare that these acts and practices should be illegal, which seemed to show at the least that they had somewhere or another a consciousness that there might be something to be said in history or in law on the other side. The Bill proposed to set up a Commission the terms of which were known to the House. It was provided further—and he merely mentioned this as showing the animus with which the measure was drafted—that the bishop might associate himself, if he chose, with the Commission in all cases within his own diocese. But there was this curious other provision—and in referring to this he had nothing to say against the noble profession of which he was a mere hanger on—that these Commissioners should be qualified by being persons who held or had held judicial appointments, or who were barristers-at-law who had been in actual practice for at least ten years. A barrister of ten years' standing, however, was not necessarily a great genius, nor did it follow that he knew much about ecclesiastical law, but although he might be chairman, according to the Second Schedule, a bishop must not be. He wondered why! He might ask with Browning whether a bishop was a knave or fool, because unless the promoters of this measure were of opinion that all bishops were either knaves or fools, there did not seem much reason for securing their exclusion from the Chair. The ancillary powers given by Clause 10 to this Commission were of the widest possible character. They had summary powers of visitation, inspection, inhibition, suspension, deprivation and ejectment of clergymen, in respect of matters dealt with by the Act, and under the cowardly and mean provision of a later sub-section the costs of the proceedings were to be paid by the person who was prosecuted, and power of sequestration of the living to meet the costs was given to the Commissioners. By Clause 7 any person who had been deprived, suspended, or inhibited by the Commissioners was to be made, under a penalty, incapable of holding any office in the Church, or curacy in any other place in England, until he had undertaken to abstain from a repetition of the practices for which he should be deprived or inhibited. He called the special attention of the House to this, having regard to Clause 9, which seemed to be the keynote of the Bill. They used to hear a good deal about the aggrieved parishioner. He wondered if hon. Gentlemen had noted that the aggrieved parishioner had almost entirely disappeared from the measure. On this subject they used to have their feelings harrowed by vivid pictures of whole parishes—they had had only one that afternoon—being in a state of revolt against their clergy, wildly indignant with them, mad to get rid of them, but unable to do so. Yet it seemed rather curious that so little faith did the promoters of the Bill have in the parishioners that they actually went outside them and provided that any person, whether a parishioner or not, was to be given this power of espionage and relation. The Commission was to be set up to judge of a man's conduct, and he asked who were the men by whom this curious system of relation and coercion was to be put in force. Undoubtedly many of the clergy, who were the especial objects of suspicion were among the most devoted workers in the parishes of this country among the poor. Let the promoters of the Bill go into the slums of London in the East End, near the docks, or in the vicinity of Holborn, or even within a few yards of that House, and they would find men who, under this Bill, it would be in the power of any informer to rout out of his parish, whether his parishioners desired it or not. A more infamous proposal was never made to the House. It must be remembered, too, that these were not the comfortably beneficed clergy, and much as they might think of the true spiritual power which the establishment gave to the Church, they were the last to cling to the endowments which did not aid the spiritual work of the Church. It was said they could give up these practices or go out of the Church, and the hon. Member for West Ham spoke as if symbols were matters of indifference. He did not think so, and he thought the real cruelty of the propositions made in the Bill was to ask men either to give up their whole life's work or to give up practices, usages, customs, and symbols which were the natural and necessary expressions of a certain great and ancient rite. These clergy might be right or wrong in holding these views, but they could not treat this as a matter settled and done with. It was said that they had a further remedy, and if they could neither conform nor go out at least they could go over to Rome. That was not a choice which ought to be put to any man. There were many like himself, who had the deepest reverence and affection and love for that Church, but because in certain matters they held that it was identical or almost identical with the Church of England, it did not follow at all that they would be able to accept other of its doctrines. What they were asked to do was to be hypocrites, in either one direction or the other. He thought that that was a choice which no man ought to be asked to make. The last word he had to say to Parliament was that this was in his view, largely a matter of liberty of conscience, and he was glad to observe that the hon. Member for Leicester and other Nonconformist Members upheld liberty of conscience. There was one of his ancestors to whom he was particularly grateful and of whom he was particularly proud. He was grateful because if it had not been for him he would not have been an Irishman; he was proud of him because he, choosing the weaker side, gave up land, family, and country and went into exile for the sake of that liberty of conscience which he believed to be one of the best things that God gave to man. He liked to believe that the spirits of those who were gone from us were conscious of what happened in this life, and he would fain hope that the old Covenanter would not altogether despise his descendant because, although his ancestor stood for the Covenant and he stood for ritualism, they joined together in the assertion of the great principle that neither king, nor Parliament, nor any individual or body of men with less than Divine authority, had any jurisdiction whatsoever over the realms of men's consciences.

*MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock), said he wished to support the Amendment moved by his hon. friend the Member for West Ham. The series of Bills dealing with this question which had made their appearance in the House, and the whole agitation engineered by the Church Association and kindred bodies, had ended in almost complete failure, because they rested on the assumption that by Parliamentary legislation thousands of clergymen could be compelled to abandon certain practices and ritual observances connected with their religious services. This was really an impossible contention. He had been the innocent means of training scores of clergymen at Oxford, and he was bound to say he frequently found their faith and zeal far more robust than their intellect. That was just the point. It was impossible to coerce faith and zeal. The whole course of English history demonstrated this. Even Queen Elizabeth's Court of High Commission succeeded in ousting only some 200 vicars and rectors from their livings. Many in that House would remember the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act, and the sound and fury of the agitation which followed. What was the nett result in the way of deprivation? Five disobedient parsons were incarcerated. If they wanted another example on similar lines the House might remember the utter failure of successive Governments to repress the conscientious objector to vaccination. Almost in spite of themselves Governments had been compelled to give way upon vaccination because it was found impossible to coerce the conscientious objections of those who were opposed to the practice.

The fact was that nine-tenths of the clergy flatly refused to recognise or accept the judgments of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. They maintained that the establishment of that court was a direct violation of the Reformation settlement, and regarded its judgments as *ipso facto* discredited. It might be urged that these judgments were the law of the land. But any fair-minded man who investigated the rather dismal records of ecclesiastical litigation in modern times must admit that a very small percentage of lawyers had studied ecclesiastical law, and that some of the judgments of the court alluded to not only contradicted admitted history, but contradicted each other. In fact a bewildered layman might well ask what is the law in this connection? But leaving the legal question on one side, and granting that the law of the land was definitely and wholly on the side of the Church Association Protestant Alliance *et hoc genus omne*, it was nevertheless quite clear that the clergy would not yield. The Protestant supporters of this Bill and others had frequently alluded in a spirit of contempt and ridicule to what was called the High Church party. Thus they described Eucharistic vestments as "ritualistic millinery" and genuflection as "posturing and antics." But he would ask those gentlemen to remember that these observances, however trivial they might appear to others, had a very real and deep significance to those who adopted them. And in any case, it was surely foreign to the whole character of such a collection of human beings as themselves to be seriously discussing a Bill like this, involving matters of devotional and spiritual significance. Some Members doubtless were religious partizans, in the best sense of the word, but others might be more aptly described as "honorary members of all religious systems." The words "abysmal ignorance" used yesterday, would accurately describe the ordinary mental position of hon. Members with respect to ecclesiastical traditions and usages. He would like to see the answers sent up by the Members of that House to an examination paper asking what was a tunicle, a chasuble, a sacring bell, and a stoup. One hon. Member speaking to him on the previous night on this question spoke in such a way as to convince him that he believed that a rubric was a garment worn by a priest. The majority of them, he thought, "trusted the larger hope" in a kindly spirit of toleration, and already believed or were beginning to believe that the State ought not to have any control over or real connection with matters theological. That was the old Nonconformist spirit, and had Nonconformists been true to it in recent years we might have had by this time a sound, complete and satisfactory secular system of national education throughout the country. He trusted that his friends would not infer that he was a ritualist posing as a Radical. That was far from being the case. He confessed on the rare occasions on which he had attended advanced ritualistic services he had been somewhat bewildered, and that one of the few incidents by which he realised he was attending a Church of England service was the collection at the end. But if the promoters of this Bill were successful, and the Bill were passed into law had they seriously or adequately realised what the results would be? The Church Association maintained that something like 5,000 to 7,000 clergymen in rural and urban parishes were either breaking the law or in direct sympathy with those who were, and a recent circular of a pictorial character that came to hon. Members of that House last night, informed them that 2,800 clergymen of the Church of England were committing flagrant violations of the law by wearing tunicles, amices, chasubles, and other vestments described in the pamphlet. A considerable percentage of the 5,000 would, of course, be unbeneficed clergymen, but still liable to inhibition. A certain number might possibly be scared into the paths of acquiescence and submission by the threatened penalties of deprivation, but the number would be small. But even if they halved the 5,000—did any sane man in that House really maintain that any Government could deprive 2,500 vicars and rectors of their livings in England in the 20th century? Was it really within the sphere of practical politics at all, and, if not, why were they discussing it that afternoon? Many of the most advanced ritualists were men whose lives were one long devotion to the cause of practical Christianity amid the deep poverty and wretchedness of our crowded cities. He might add in passing that many of them were men of really progressive views, who never cast a vote for Toryism and never would, although some recent appointments would seem to indicate that the more reactionary and more Tory a clergyman was the better was his chance of promotion under a Liberal Government. These men could not be deprived of their livings. What law that could ever be passed would be strong enough to turn a man like Father Dolling out of his living? It was a practicable impossibility. Talk about aggrieved parishioners! They would find not only aggrieved parishioners, but aggressive parishioners who would rally round such a man, if he resisted sentence of deprivation. In short, if any attempt were made to enforce the provisions of such an Act, they would arouse in England such a frenzy of religious strife and bitterness as had never been seen since the Act of Uniformity in 1662. No doubt Protestant Churchmen had grievances—grievances from England quite as substantial as those from Ireland, which helped so much to fill the wastepaper baskets in that House. The laity had by no means an adequate voice in Church matters or in the selection of their clergy; they had no discipline in the Established Church comparable to that which was in vogue amongst Presbyterians or Wesleyans. Theological irritation got deep hold on a man whose devotions were rendered impossible because a clergyman wore a particular garment, and whose religious feelings were deeply wounded if prayers were offered for the dead. But as long as they persisted in maintaining the Establishment they must, he was afraid, put up with their lot. The Low Church clergy were comparatively a small minority, and, as a philosophic Nonconformist had told the House, minorities must suffer. Of all the young clergy sent out from the University of Oxford he did not think that more than one in seven was a Low Churchman. It had been stated that in 1834 there were only two clergymen who violated the law, and according to the Church Association the law-breakers now ran into thousands. Low Churchmen had admitted and undoubted grievances, but they had invested their spiritual capital so to speak in the Establishment and they must take it with its risks and penalties. He held no brief for the clergy as such. With rare exceptions they were the opponents, often bitter opponents, of all those political ideals which were dear to him; their selfish obstinacy had hindered the work of educational reform, and by their disgraceful alliance with wealthy brewers, they had helped to put a stumbling block in the path of our young citizens, the sin which the Founder of our religion most sternly denounced. Speaking of the licensed victuallers and the Church he might say that recently at Hull a special service was held at the parish Church and the two hymns sung on that occasion were "Oh God, our help in ages past," and "The Church's one foundation." He appealed therefore for support to the Amendment, not because he was anti-Protestant or pro-Ritualist, but because, firstly, the Bill was utterly impracticable, and more especially because if carried, it would delay the great object of all true progressives, the disestablishment of the Church. He noticed with pleasure the Amendment of his hon. friend the Member for the Cricklade division, and the admirable maiden speech of another staunch Nonconformist, the hon. Member for the Shipley division, and he wished all Nonconformists would see eye to eye with them in this matter. He read the other day a remarkably able letter from the Rev. John Lee, a well known Congregational minister at Newcastle, with reference to the deplorable state of things in that diocese, for which the present Government was directly responsible, and he described the campaign against the local High Churchmen as a "senseless crusade of Protestant bigots." He would himself hesitate to use such strong language in public as regards the promoters of this Bill. But he begged the Members of the House not to be led away by the petty and futile side issues raised by the present Bill, but to concentrate their efforts on freeing the Church from her connection with the State and thus allowing her the privilege accorded to all other denominations of settling her religious differences in her own way.

*MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince) said he had never heard a debate in the House maintained at such a high level. He had listened with the greatest possible pleasure to the masterly speech of the hon. Member for West Ham. It was a most eloquent and moving speech, but he really wondered where it all led to. It seemed to him to be in the nature of a beautiful balloon, away up in the clouds, far from all practical realities of the situation, rather than a speech that had for its object the furtherance of any definite purpose. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down asked, Is the Bill practical politics? Well, was the Amendment practical politics? He felt quite certain that the motive of the hon. Member for West Ham was a perfectly high and sincere one, but he was equally certain that the object set out in the Amendment was not within half a century of practical politics. So far as one who was acquainted with the minds of labouring people was concerned, he said distinctly that, considering the mass of social reform that both great parties in the State had set themselves to deal with, it could not be thought for one moment that this vast problem of the disendowment and disestablishment of the Church of England—a Church which had so deeply rooted itself in the national life—was practical politics. The Liberal Party had undertaken many campaigns resolutely, but they would never undertake a more stubborn or protracted campaign than one for the disestablishment of the Church of England. One fact in the Amendment was admitted—that the disorder in the Church of England had increased, and was increasing [Cries of "No"]. All sides admitted that it ought to be diminished. The hon. Member for East Toxteth suggested that the mind of the Member for West Ham had gone back to mediæval times. But the hon. Member had gone back a great deal further. He had gone back to the remote ages of antiquity referred to by Charles Lamb, when it was thought necessary by Ho Ti and Bo Bo to burn down a house to roast a pig. It was said to be impossible for a Labour Member to lift his mind to any question above that affecting his daily bread. If that were true it was not a very serious matter; but he knew there was a vast number of people in South West Lancashire who were deeply moved by this question of Church disorder. Hundreds and thousands of Churchmen, having found no redress, had had to sever their connection with the Church. But he did not believe really that it was necessary to destroy the whole fabric of the Church of England in order to put this disorder right, and it was altogether too late in the day to set up the claim that the Church of England was purely a spiritual entity or organisation. Of course, in many respects she was that, but at the same time she built upon a physical basis, however high her spiritual aspiration. It was altogether too late in the day to demur to the interference of the State. The State had been interfering for at least 370 years. In a matter which centred itself so deeply in the mind of the nation the House had an absolute and unquestioned right to say that, so long as the connection was maintained between Church and State, they would in every possible way lessen the disorder and unrest which made for great social disorder. It was on these lines that he besought the support of Members for the Bill. The Amendment was not practical politics. Tho purpose of the general supporters of the Amendment was to side-track and deaden the issue. The issue was a real one, and ought to be grappled with now, and in the same sense that that debate had been carried on, he thought it would be admitted by every one, from a lofty standpoint, the House ought to set itself to deal with the question. [illegible]

MR. HAWORTH (Manchester, S.) said he would not have intervened for a moment had it not been for an appeal, if he might call it so, on the part of its mover, to Nonconformists to support the Amendment in favour of the disestablishment of the Church of England. As one who was strongly in favour of disestablishment, and as a Nonconformist, he was sorry he could not yield to that appeal. He would, on the contrary, quite unofficially, of course, and as an individual Member, appeal to his fellow-Nonconformists, who were strongly and ardently in favour of disestablishment as a principle, to vote—anomalous though it might seem on the face of it—against the Amendment. They were there not only as Nonconformists, but as citizens, as upholders of the law of the land, and if he might be allowed to describe himself, he would say he was an Erastian Nonconformist. As long as the Church was established by law, it seemed to him plain that the Church ought to be compelled to obey that law, just as any citizen ought to be compelled to obey the law as laid down in that House. One could not help being carried away with intense admiration and sympathy as the mover of the Amendment was speaking, not only because of his innate eloquence, but because of his manifest sincerity. One felt entirely in agreement with him when he appealed to them on behalf of those members of the Church who did so much good in the poorer quarters of the cities especially, who were so earnest and intent upon trying to do good and to effect social amelioration by means of that Church, and by any other means to their hands; but when he appealed to him, amongst others, as a Nonconformist, to vote for disestablishment upon this issue, he must frankly say that, sincere though they all knew the hon. Member to be, that was not the issue before the House. The House last year passed, by a very large majority, a Resolution in favour of disestablishment, and they were now asked originally to uphold the law as it was in the Church. With that they must all, apart from any ideas of Church practices, be in favour, but he would remind the hon. Member who moved the Amendment that the remedy, after all, was in his own hands. He had studied deeply ecclesiastical history, and he could not altogether have overlooked the history of Nonconformity. He had spoken of the revolution, the secession from the Church of Rome, and he was not ignorant of the other secession from the Church of England, and if he wished for particular forms of religious exercise, or observance, or church governance, the door which was open to Nonconformist ancestors hundreds of years ago was open to the hon. Member to-day. He might come out of the Church, he might maintain with his friends any form of worship that he desired, and he might strive to do good according to his own way or the dictates of his own conscience.

MR. MASTERMAN: May I interrupt? I wish no kind of special religious worship except that of the law of the Church.

MR. HAWORTH, continuing, said he understood the Amendment to appeal for disestablishment, that was to say for freedom, and what he would point out was that the door was open to the hon. Member to-day to obtain that freedom which the Nonconformists obtained for themselves some hundreds of years ago. It was for that reason, feeling that the door was open to him, that they were there to uphold the law, and that he as a Nonconformist must take up the apparently anomalous position of opposing what seemed to be on the face of it a disestablishment resolution.

LORD R. CECIL said that of the many remarkable features of that debate he did not think anything could have been more remarkable than two of the observations made by the last two speakers. The hon. Member who had just addressed the House described himself as an Erastian Nonconformist. He felt inclined to think that if that observation were addressed to him by anyone else he would regard it as actionable under the law of libel. The hon. Member had proceeded to make an eloquent appeal to the House to enforce the law, whatever the law was, and under all circumstances. The hon. Member thoroughly disapproved of a passive resistance movement, he presumed, and was prepared to send his fellow Nonconformists to prison with the lightest of light hearts. But his statement, interesting and valuable as it was, did not appear to be quite so interesting as one of the observations made by the hon. Member for South-west Lancashire. He, speaking as a member of the working classes, said he regarded the disestablishment of the Church of England—and he presumed also the disendowment—as outside the range of practical politics. That was a very interesting observation and one which would give him, he admitted, greater comfort had it not been for the promotion of this extraordinary Bill, which appeared to him to lead straight towards disestablishment. The procedure of the House of Commons was surprising in itself in many respects, and there was nothing more surprising than the extraordinary variety of ways in which they spent their Friday afternoons. He doubted whether the historian of the future would believe it possible that a highly-civilised State allowed it to be settled entirely by lot and merely by the chances of the ballot, whether they should discuss the details of the registration of voters in London, or Woman Suffrage, or the Daylight Saving Bill, or a measure for instituting such vast changes as that which was then before the House. Owing to the extreme coyness of those who had advocated this measure, he doubted whether the House realised what a tremendous revolution was proposed by the provisions of the Bill. The mere statement with which the Memorandum began, that the precedent for the Bill must be sought in the times of the Reformation, when by general consent this country was governed by a form of government as near tyranny as had ever flourished in this country—that alone, he would have thought, would have given hon. Members some pause in considering the Bill; but when they came to look at what was proposed in the Bill, when they realised that they were to appoint those High Commissioners, that they were to have power to issue penal inquiries directed to the person to be accused, that those inquiries were not even to be entrusted to the High Commissioners alone but to any assistant Commissioner that they might choose to appoint, that the complaints that they were to hear were to originate from anyone at all, so long as he chose to assert that he was a member of the Church of England, that if he was a convict just out of prison they were bound to hear any complaint made against the most saintly clergyman in the land, that they were compelled to consider those very complaints which were brought before the Royal Commission by evidence which was characterised in a manner which it was unnecessary for him to read to the House and that the Bill, in the form of declaratory legislation, which was a very dangerous sort of legislation, proceeded to carry out a series of very searching changes in the present law and lumped together in a schedule a large number of offences, some of them important and some of them trivial, for the infringement of any one of which the Commission was given absolute power first to suspend the clergyman and then to deprive him—that was, to destroy the whole work of his life and send him and his family into ruin and beggary—that seemed to him a very large order for a Friday afternoon. The hon. Member for North West Ham thought that the only alternative to that revolution was disestablishment. He was not going to discuss on that occasion at any length that question, but it was certainly a very striking thing that in four or five hours they were really expected to discuss not only the provisions of the Bill itself but the proposal for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England. He would only remind the House what disestablishment meant. It meant, of course, a reversal of the policy of this country which had existed, not as an hon. Member had said, for three or four hundred years, but for more than a thousand years at any rate; it meant a definite division between the State and all forms of Christianity, because it was not proposed to establish any other form of Christianity; it meant the definite abandonment of the union between the State and the Church which, in his judgment and in the judgment of many other Members, had done far more for the State than it had ever done for the Church; and of course it meant, at any rate in the minds of hon. Members opposite, the disendowment of the Church as well. He would not go fully, either, into the question of disendowment, but he thought the speech of the hon. Member for the Cricklade Divison must have shown to the House what a vast change, in his judgment, would be brought about by the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England; he pictured the Church, as he put it, set free from all the trammels of the State and deprived of all its means of existence. He understood the hon. Member to say that the Church of Ireland received far too favourable terms, and he presumed the hon. Member proposed to mete out to the Church of England even less favourable terms.

*MR. MASSIE: I stand for partial disendowment.

LORD R. CECIL, continuing, said he did not know exactly until he saw the hon. Member's Bill what that meant, but he certainly said that the effect of the disendowment would be that they would have each congregation if necessary setting up for itself, and he contemplated that as a means by which the unruly clergyman would be kept in order, the congregation disapproving of his actions being able to cut off his stipend, and he thought the effect would undoubtedly be to weaken and probably to split up the Church of England. But apart from all those ecclesiastical aspects of the case, looking at it only as a matter of property, there had never been so great a displacement of property, so great a transference from one set of people to another, as would occur in the case of disendowment. He understood the view of those who thought that a great corporate body which held great funds and might have failed in its duty to carry out the purposes for which those funds were entrusted to it, might be deprived of those funds, and the funds given to those who were more nearly doing that which they were entrusted to do; but would the hon. Member for the Cricklade division say that the Church of England was not now discharging, and discharging splendidly, the duties which were originally entrusted to it, whether by the State or in any other way? No one would say at that moment that, taking the Church as a whole, she was failing in her duty towards the State; and therefore to ask the House on a Friday afternoon to assent to a Motion for disestablishment and disendowment as the only alternative to a Bill which was in some ways even worse, appeared to him to be a striking comment on the procedure of the House. He wanted to impress upon members of the Church of England and on those who had promoted the Bill, who were, he doubted not, as loyal members of the Church as anyone present, the effect which the mere production of their Bill had had on the House. The mere production of the Bill had given a great impulse to the cause of disestablishment. He asked them to consider whether, being opposed as he believed they were, to any such policy, they were wise in promoting time after time those violent and tyrannical measures, for that was what they were, the only direct effect of which was to encourage those who disapproved altogether of the connection between the Church and State. He recognised that the objects of the promoters were very important. The hon. Member for the Cricklade division had suggested that if he was a Machiavelli, which none of them accused him of being, he would be disposed to support the Bill, because he thought it would lead straight to disestablishment. He did not at all disagree with him, and he sometimes wondered whether the people who supported the Bill were really moved by that object themselves. There was no doubt that if they merely wished to bring confusion into the Church, to make it more difficult for the Church to carry on its duty, to make the connection between the Church and State absolutely intolerable, they were going on in the proper way to do it if they promoted a measure of this description. He did not in the least attribute to the hon. Member who moved the Bill, and the hon. Members who had supported it, any such elaborate or deceptive policy. They appeared to have two great motives at the back of their minds. First, they were much oppressed by the lawlessness of the Church, and they proposed by the Bill to suppress that disorder. The machinery was certainly rather curious. The list of things they proposed to suppress in the Third Schedule, appeared to be one of the most fantastic lists he had ever read. They set out in the beginning a list of certain ecclesiastical vestments. He fully admitted that he had a very vague idea of what a tunicle, or an alb, or a chasuble might be, but he observed that they had left out certain other vestments which were more commonly worn and were, so far as he knew, in the same position in reference to legality as the ones they had included. He did not know why they had not included even stoles, which were in precisely the same position. If their object was really to enforce upon the Church that view of the law which they themselves held, there was no reason why they should not include them. But a much more serious objection to the Schedule was that hon. Members who had read the Report of the Royal Commission would remember that that Commission divided the illegalities into those which had significance, and those which had no significance, and it was a very remarkable fact that almost all of those which the Royal Commission said had significance were omitted from the list. It was very disagreeable to have to mention these things, but none of the practices or ornaments in connection with the Virgin Mary were included in the list, and yet a large number of provisions about lighting candles on the altar and stone communion tables, and a variety of things which it required a well-read ecclesiastical antiquarian to understand, were included in the list, and the ones of real importance were excluded altogether. He failed to understand the principle on which that list had been compiled.

*MR. McARTHUR: The principle on which the schedule is compiled is that the vestments and ornaments scheduled are confined to those expressly condemned by a legal decision in the Courts.

LORD R. CECIL, proceeding, said the hon. Member did not appreciate the point. Stoles, for instance, stood in precisely the same position as chasubles, and there was no reason in the world for repudiating the one and omitting the other. He could give instances of omission, of a much more serious character the only principle apparently being that things really of very little importance had been included, and things of vital importance, representing a serious and dangerous departure from the doctrines of the Church of England, had been omitted. He understood that the object which impressed so strongly the mover and supporters of the Bill was this. It was said, "Here is a large corporation with a large number of paid servants all over the country. They are paid upon the condition that they carry out the laws of the land in respect to their duty, and if they fail to carry out the laws of the land then they ought to be deprived of the remuneration which is given to them upon that condition." That was the dilemma. They were to obey the law or give up their duty. The whole difficulty had arisen because those clergy were not conscious of intentional law-breaking. The mass of them believed as strongly as anyone could that they had been carrying out the laws incumbent upon them. They were law-breakers because they took a different view of a very difficult question indeed, viz: what was the law with reference to this subject; and the difficulty was much increased by the fact that the Courts which had had to interpret and declare the law were, not unjustly, the objects of profound suspicion to the clergy. It was not only that they were in fact destitute of all spiritual authority, but no one who had studied the history of the decisions given by the Privy Council could have failed to observe that the Privy Council had constantly been swayed, or apparently swayed, by motives which ought never to form part of a judicial decision at all. No one could really believe that a tribunal of that eminence could have arrived at precisely contrary conclusions as to the law of the land unless they had allowed to enter into their judgment a variety of considerations which were not proper for them to consider as Judges at all. Therefore until they had really secured the existence of a tribunal which would command the respect of those clergy who were subject to its jurisdiction, there was very little hope indeed that they would really deal with the essential source of the lawlessness, which he, for one, thoroughly agreed was very much to be deplored. All this talk of lawlessness was not the real question. The real question was not lawlessness—and it had appeared abundantly from the speech of the hon. Member for Liverpool—but the fear that the Church of England was being carried by unscrupulous priests in the direction of Rome. That was the real fundamental difficulty. He thought a good deal of that was founded on a total misapprehension of the ritualist movement, with which he had personally very little sympathy indeed, but which undoubtedly existed and had a very important effect upon the history of the Church of England. The ritualist movement was not mainly Roman. It was mainly towards mediævalism, but not towards Rome. Nor was it in the least true to say that not only had it increased but that it was increasing. He did not in the least believe that the ritualist movement in the Church was increasing at the present day. Twenty years ago all the energetic and vigorous clergy of the Church of England cared more for the restoration of services to what they conceived to be the true ideal for a branch of the Catholic Church and less for its other duties, but at the present day that was altogether changed. The interests of the clergy, if they were High Church, tended towards missionary work or towards social reform; if they were not so High Church——

Mr. McArthur rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Lord R. CECIL, continuing amid interruptions, said that whatever might have been true twenty years ago, it was no longer true to say that the clergy of the Church of England were moved solely by their ritualist, still less by their Romanising, inclinations. Unquestionably it must be conceded that the plan proposed to be adopted by the hon. Member for the Cricklade Division would fail.

Mr. Austin Taylor rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

And, it being Five of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): Owing to the indisposition of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, it will certainly be impossible to take the debate on the Irish Motion of the hon. Member for Waterford on Monday next, and that Motion will be postponed for a short time. I hope an early day will be found when it can be taken. In consequence of that change in the business, we propose to take for the first Order on Monday the discussion on the Anglo-Russian Agreement, in regard to which Notice of Motion has been given. The second Order will be the Children Bill.

Mr. J. REDMOND (Waterford) said they much regretted the illness of the Chief Secretary, and they entirely agreed that the debate could not be satisfactorily conducted in the absence of the Minister responsible for Ireland. They hoped that in a comparatively short time after the right hon. Gentleman resumed his seat in the House the Government would be able to arrange a satisfactory date for the debate.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at five minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 17th February, 1908.

The Earl of Lovelace sat first in Parliament after the death of his brother.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with—Commercial Union Assurance Company [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company [H.L.]; Crystal Palace Company [H.L.]; Law Guarantee Trust and Accident and United Legal Indemnity Insurance Societies [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway [H.L.]; Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway [H.L.]; Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) [H.L.]: Great Western Railway [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES (MISCELLANEOUS).

No. 46. Northern Nigeria—(Report on the results of the Mineral Survey, 1904-1905, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute).

No. 47. Northern Nigeria—(Report on the results of the Mineral Survey, 1905-1906, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute).

No. 48. Nyasaland Protectorate—(Report on the results of the Mineral Survey, 1906-1907, by Professor Wyndham R. Dunstan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Director of the Imperial Institute)

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 3958. Mexico—Budget, 1908-1909.

LIGHTHOUSE ADMINISTRATION.

Report of the Royal Commission on Lighthouse Administration: Volume II. Minutes of Evidence, with Appendices and Index.

TREATY SERIES No. 5 (1908).

Accession of Colombia to the Convention signed at Geneva, 6th July, 1906, for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and sick in armies in the field, 28th October, 1907.

Presented [by Command], and ordered to lie upon the Table.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL AND TRAVERS' FOUNDATION (CAPITAL AND INCOME ACCOUNTS, 1906-1907).

Accounts of the receipt and expenditure of the capital and of the income derived from the lands and other property held for the benefit of Greenwich Hospital, and the Foundation of Samuel Travers, Esquire, for the year ending 31st March, 1907; together with the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon.

FACTORY AND WORSHOP.

Orders by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated 26th December, 1907—

Allowing as regards laundries, that separate departments of work may be treated as separate factories or workshops.

Revoking a previous Order and granting a special exception authorising the occupiers of certain classes of factories and workshops to substitute some other day for Saturday as the weekly short day.

Granting to certain factories and workshops a special exception as to the period of employment for women and young persons, and revoking the Order of 24th July, 1906.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Closing order made by the urban district council of Bray.

Order made by the town council of the borough of Darlington, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the borough.

POLLING DISTRICT.

Order made by the council of the county of Stafford, altering the Chase Town Polling District of the Lichfield Parliamentary Division, and constituting a new polling district to be called the Chase Terrace Polling District of the Lichfield Parliamentary Division.

SUPERANNUATION.

Treasury Minute, dated 12th February, 1901, declaring that Henry Judd, artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service certificate through inadvertence on the part of the head of his Department.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh to the Secretary for Scotland under the provisions of the Act, for the year 1906–1907. Annual Report on the state of the finances of the University of Edinburgh under the provisions of the Act, for the year 1906–1907. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MERCANTILE MARINE.

Return respecting: Laid before the House (pursuant to Order of the 28th of May, 1906), and to be printed. (No. 14.)

NEW BILLS.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Acts relating to Crofters' Holdings in Scotland — Was presented by the Lord Saltoun (for the Lord Lovat); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 15.)

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to regulate the sale of certain poisonous substances, and to amend the Pharmacy Acts—Was presented by the Lord President (*E. Crewe*); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 16.)

MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION BILL [H.L.].

[FIRST READING.]

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH rose to present a Bill to authorise the introduction of proportional representation in municipal elections, and for other purposes. The noble Lord said: My Lords, it will be in the recollection of some of your Lordships that last year I had the honour of presenting a Bill dealing with the election of the councils of our English municipal boroughs. Your Lordships were pleased to give that Bill a Second Reading and to refer it to a Select Committee, who made careful examination of the Bill, took evidence upon it, and presented a Report. I will only say at this moment on that Report that it was more favourable, I think, than the promoters of the Bill could have hoped, certainly as favourable as they could possibly have wished, to their object. It spoke strongly in favour of the working character of the machinery proposed in the Bill, and, though it made certain recommendations, those recommendations did not affect the essence of the Bill itself. The Bill which I now have the honour to introduce to your Lordships is the same Bill as last year, with the recommendations proposed by the Select Committee incorporated in it. Practically it has undergone no other change.

Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to enter a little into detail and explain the character of the recommendations of the Select Committee. As your Lordships are aware, the municipal councils of our English boroughs are elected in two different ways. The provincial municipal boroughs, organised under the Act of 1835, are divided into wards, each represented by three, or some multiple of three members, and there is a change in every ward each year of one-third of the members. One member at least, therefore, has to be elected, and, in some cases, two or three, in each ward every year, and the electors of the ward, by a majority, determine who shall be the representative or representatives. That system entails a burden which is sometimes felt and complained of—the burden of recurrent elections, which turn too often on political considerations. But the fact that the council is elected one-third every year, although these recurrent elections are perpetuated, does save the council from being completely overturned, as might happen if the whole of the members had to be elected every third year.

But this system involves other difficulties besides that of recurrent elections. In each ward the majority returns the members for that ward, and in that way the representation of the ward is practically always of the same character if the majority of the electors remain of the same way of thinking. And if they are of the same way of thinking throughout the borough, you have a council of a uniform character, and one which, since political considerations enter, may wholly consist of members of one or other political Party. That has happened in the past, but, happily, not often. At the same time there is this determination of the choice by political considerations, and some of the best burgesses of a borough, excellently qualified by public spirit and knowledge for service on the municipal council, are often excluded from membership because they cannot enter under the patronage of one of the political Parties.

The machinery is also open to this grave objection, that it is a matter of chance whether the council of the borough does or does not represent a majority of the electors. If the wards are divided, as they sometimes are, in an uneven fashion, or, again, if it happens that the electors of one way of thinking are congregated too densely in one or two wards, they do not get their share of representation, and you may have this consequence, that the majority of the elected members of the council are of one way of thinking and the majority of the electors of the whole borough of another. That has happened, as your Lordships are aware, again and again in larger assemblies. But there is the great advantage, as I have already said, in the case of municipal boroughs organised under the Act of 1835, that you cannot get a complete overturn of the representation.

The boroughs conducted under a different system are the boroughs of the metropolis, which were brought into existence under the Act of 1899. There the feeling was strong against annual elections. The elections to the metropolitan borough councils, therefore, take place every third year, the whole of the representatives being elected triennially. The consequence is that the majority of the electors in a ward, according to the present system, can return all the representatives of the ward, and frequently do, to the exclusion of the representation of the minority; and our London boroughs are so constituted that in many cases the same character of electorate runs from ward to ward, and what prevails in one ward is not altered or checked by what is found to prevail in other wards. Therefore you have a whole borough represented by persons favoured by one political organisation. This was shown in a remarkable degree in the last elections of the metropolitan borough councils. In two or three instances the members elected were what are called, in political phraseology, Progressives, and not a single member was elected who was not a Progressive. A man might be as well qualified as possible for public service, but, if he did not happen to be a Progressive, he had no chance of success in those boroughs. But in the greater number of boroughs at the last election the wards returned an unbroken phalanx of Moderates, and there none but Moderates are found on the borough councils. Of course, your Lordships will see that to bring about that result and maintain it involves a great deal of political controversy, and a departure from what are often the proper methods on which borough councils should be elected.

The result is attended with an even worse consequence. Since all the members are elected at these triennial elections, you may get a change of opinion, it may be of a sudden and spasmodic character, which completely overturns the representation, not merely of a ward, but of all the wards in a borough. In one case brought before the Committee, a borough which had been represented in previous years by a considerable majority of Progressives returned at the last election a uniform body of Moderates. That involved the loss of all the qualities for public service to be found in previous service. These were entirely lost. In some of the metropolitan boroughs to which I refer the new bodies were at great inconvenience, for they had lost the old chairman of the Finance Committee and the chairmen of the various other committees. All the experience that had been gained by these members had been lost; and in their place there was a body of raw members who had to be very much guided—no doubt wisely guided—by the expert servants of the particular council.

The Bill which I had the honour to introduce last year proposed to give to town councils the power of adopting the different processes of voting which should secure a varied representation according to the varied character of the electors within each municipal area. I need not detain your Lordships at this moment upon the method that was proposed to be adopted, but the result aimed at was that if you had five persons to be elected as representatives of a ward, those five members would represent five separate divisions of opinion within the ward. You would thus be able to bring in members who were independent of both political Parties. At the same time you would secure to political Parties all the power and influence they could exert, and you would secure continuity of service, for the approved persons would not be liable to be upset by the majority being against them, because the continued support of an adequate minority would secure their continued presence in the council.

This was the Bill which was submitted to the Select Committee appointed by your Lordships. That Committee in its Report admitted that the machinery of the Bill was well fitted to accomplish its purpose, and would, in fact, secure that end. The members who constituted that Committee received evidence from persons interested in the subject, but they had also the very great advantage—one which can scarcely be over-estimated—of seeing the actual election of a medical council in London conducted according to the method contained in the Bill; and seeing that election must, I think, have had considerable influence in bringing about their unanimous opinion as to the practicability of the method proposed in the Bill. They thought that returning officers could be found who would be able to carry on the elections, and that they would be able to train their staff to assist them in the work. They had, no doubt, qualifications to add. They were not sure that the majority of the electors would always understand quite what they were doing, and they had some doubt whether, when they had done everything that was possible, they would realise the connection between their voting act and the result when declared. I confess I think these anxieties as to the qualifications of the electors are over exaggerated. We are always too much disposed to underestimate the intelligence of our neighbours; but I think English electors, whether they be in municipal boroughs in town or in country, must be at least equal in intelligence to electors who are found in other countries, where a much more elaborate system of election than that in this Bill has been successfully carried through. The Committee, therefore, proposed no alteration whatever in the machinery of the Bill.

The Bill is of a permissive character. As introduced last year it suggested that the majority of a council, at a meeting convened for that purpose, should be empowered to adopt the Act. The Committee regarded that as too great a power to entrust to a bare majority, and they recommended that the majority necessary to adopt the Act should be three-fifths; that the adoption should be experimental for three years only, at the end of which time the council might, by a bare majority, adopt it again for a second period of three years; and that if, at the end of the second three years, they desired to continue the system, they should then adopt it by resolution, which should be placed on the Table of the two Houses of Parliament, and if either House within forty days moved an Address displacing the resolution the adoption of it by the borough should be null and void. Thus you will see that the recommendations of the Committee extended only to the mode under which the Act should be adopted; they did not at all interfere with the provisions of the Bill itself. The Bill, as I now submit it to your Lordships, contains these recommendations, which have been adopted as faithfully and accurately as possible. Under these circumstances I submit the Bill to you with great confidence, fortified as it has been by the examination and recommendations of the Select Committee.

If I am encouraged in re-presenting this Bill by the result of the examination of the Select Committee last year, I am still more encouraged, I think, in respect to the general question of which this Bill is only a partial and local application, by what has gone on in our own Colonies and on the Continent of Europe since this measure was submitted to your Lordships last year. Sweden has adopted proportional representation, and in Holland there has been a considerable advance made towards it, inasmuch as the Ministry of the day have applied for powers to get this constitutional change brought under consideration with a view to its being adopted. These countries are only following the examples of Belgium and Switzerland, the first to adopt it.

Then, again, I have received the greatest encouragement from one of our Colonies. A few years ago, in the election of a part of its Legislature, Tasmania adopted a system absolutely in conformity with that provided in this Bill. The success of the experiment was too great. It confounded the Party managers, who discovered that some of their authority had gone, and they could not command the machinery as they had before. They thereupon induced the Legislature to repeal the system of proportional representation. A general election followed, and the Government which brought about that repeal were entirely deposed, and a new popular Chamber came into existence which resolved upon re-establishing the system that had been set aside. With that encouragement on the larger scale, I present this Bill to your Lordships and ask you to read it a first time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª"—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, my noble friend, in making the speech he has—a very interesting speech, containing a certain amount of detail—has adopted a course on the First Reading of a Bill more frequent in the House which he adorned so long than in your Lordship's House. I hope, therefore, he will not consider that it is from any disrespect to him, or from any doubt as to the importance of the subject with which he is so closely connected, if no further debate takes place at this stage, and if we adopt the more customary course of discussing it on Second Reading.

On Question, Bill read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 17.)

ASIATICS IN THE COLONIES.

LORD AMPTHILL rose to ask His Majesty's Government whether they intended to take steps to invite the Governments of the Colonies to discuss, by conference or otherwise, the question of the treatment of Asiatics in the Colonies, with a view to arriving at agreement upon general principles of Imperial application; and whether His Majesty's Government did not consider that the recent action of the Canadian Government in regard to Japanese, and of the Transvaal Government in regard to British Indians, both conspicuous demonstrations of the belief of the Colonies in the paramount importance of Imperial unity, was sufficient proof that the Governments of the Colonies would welcome an opportunity of further considering this important subject. The noble Lord said: My Lords, the Question on the Paper is one of those which I put to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the recent discussion on the treatment of British Indians in South Africa, and to which the noble Earl omitted to reply. I need not repeat what I said on that occasion; but, in view of the considerable public interest in the question, I have thought it justifiable to ask the noble Earl once more for information as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): My Lords, I have to apologise to the noble Lord for having failed to answer this Question on the previous occasion. I had noted the Question, but unfortunately omitted to reply at the time. I should like to explain to the noble Lord that, though I am well aware he was desirous that this subject should have been put forward on the programme of the late Conference, and that it was not so put forward, as a matter of fact it was debated at the Conference. If he will turn to the proceedings of the tenth day, he will find that the subject came up and was debated, on the one side by Sir William Lyne, representing Australia, and, on the other, by Sir James Mackay, as representing the Indian Government. The discussions, I think I may say for Conference discussions, were of a somewhat lively nature. At any rate, the result was the adoption of an absolutely uncompromising position by Sir William Lyne, and the prescribing of conditions to which I am sure the Government of India, or Sir James Mackay at the moment, could never assent. Although no other speakers directly dealt with the matter on that occasion, I am in a position to say that New Zealand's attitude with regard to the exclusion of Asiatics does not differ in principle from that set forth by Sir William Lyne. It would be difficult, so soon after the Conference at which this conversation took place, to initiate a fresh discussion, whether "by conference or otherwise"—to use the noble Lord's words. Then, with regard to the second part of the Question, the noble Lord has spoken with a just appreciation of the action taken by one of the oldest and by one of the youngest of our Colonies, but I venture to think these incidents also suggest caution. Surely, it is of the essence of the arrangements which these two Colonies have made that at this moment, so soon after the feeling which has been excited, there should be nothing whatever to throw any challenge on the validity of those arrangements. Would it be fair now to invite them to enter into a fresh discussion before the ink of those settlements was dry? The moment, I consider, is not opportune for entering into the particular inquiries which have been suggested by the noble Lord, but I hope he will believe that I am in no way out of sympathy with the object in view. I think I may claim to have every reason to feel, as keenly as the noble Lord, obligation towards our fellow-subjects in India. I hope he will believe that I will use any opportunity which I consider a real opportunity, either by the means suggested in the Question, or perhaps by some more diplomatic method; and I think no one who bears the noble Lord's name will object if I have a preference for diplomacy.

House adjourned at Five o'clock till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 17th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz: Draycott Gas Bill; Gosport Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; Bromley and Crays Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 63 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 63 has been complied with, viz.: Southwell District Gas Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Swinton and Mexbrough Gas Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Petition from Clones, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation from Abingdon; Ackworth; Alford; Childrey; Drayton; Marcham; Seven Kings; Sutton on Sea; and Swansea (two); to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Bletchley; Bromley Common; Burgess Hill; East Ham; Linton (two); Norwich (two); and Rochdale; to lie upon the Table.

BRITISH MUSEUM.

Petition of the Trustees of the British Museum, for grant in aid (King's Recommendation signified); referred to the Committee of Supply.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LIGHTHOUSE ADMINISTRATION (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission on Lighthouse Administration. Volume II. Minutes of Evidence, with Appendices and Index [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Town Council of the Borough of Darlington, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACTS (SPECIAL EXCEPTION — EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN 9 A.M. AND 9 P.M.).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated 26th December, 1907, in pursuance of Section 36 of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as amended by the Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, granting to certain Factories and Workshops a Special Exception as to the period of employment for women and young persons, and revoking the Order of 24th July, 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACTS (SEPARATION OF DEPARTMENTS—PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT).

Copy presented—of Order made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, dated 26th December, 1907, in pursuance of Section 151 of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as amended by the Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, allowing, as regards Laundries, that separate Departments of Work may be treated as separate Factories or Workshops [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3958 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 5, 1908).

Copy presented, of Accession of Colombia to the Convention, signed at Geneva, 6th July, 1906, for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field, 28th October, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

WOODS, FORESTS, AND LAND REVENUES.

Abstract Accounts presented, for the year ended 31st March, 1907, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 59.]

SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copy presented, of Treasury Minute, dated 12th February, 1908, declaring that Henry Judd, Artificer, Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, War Office, was appointed without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Head of his Department [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Copy presented, of Report on the state of the Finances of the University, made by the University Court, for the year 1906–7 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 60.]

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Copy presented, of Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh for the year 1906–7 [by Act] to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 61.]

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889, (ORDINANCE).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. XXI. (Edinburgh, No. 9) (Regulations as to Bursaries, etc.) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 62.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Urban District Council of Bray, and confirmed by the Lords Justices General and General Governors of Ireland, providing for the Early Closing of certain Shops within the urban district [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Emigrants.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what were the numbers of emigrants in each of the years 1905, 1906, and 1907; and what was the last previous year in which the statistics of Irish emigration most nearly approximated to those for 1905.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The number of emigrants (natives of Ireland) in each of the years mentioned was as follows: 1905, 30,676; 1906, 35,344; and 1907, 39,082. The nearest approximation to the figures in 1905 was in the year 1898, in which 32,241 persons emigrated.

Agricultural Rate Grant.

MR. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will explain how the calculation which guided the grant in 1882 of £250,000 as compensation for disturnpiked and main roads was arrived at; will he state the assessable value of the land which the Agricultural Rate Grant, 1896, dealt with at the passing of the Act, and the average rates in the pound which the benefited land was paying in 1896; will he also state the assessable value of agricultural land which in the year 1907 received the benefit of the remission and the average rates which such land was paying; and will he state how much money the Exchequer contributed to local authorities under the Agricultural Rate Grant Act in the last financial year and how much the local authorities had to allow in the same period, and how much has been returned to the owner of the tithe rent-charges under the 1899 Act and from what source it was secured.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. It would appear that the calculation which guided the grant made in 1882 in respect of disturnpiked and main roads was that of the amount required for distribution according to the Minute laid before Parliament in the Paper 365 of 1882, a copy of which I will send to my hon. friend. The amount seems to have been based on the actual cost of the maintenance of the roads in the latest year for which there were available Returns, but was to some extent conjectural. The rateable value of agricultural land in England and Wales, as defined in the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, was, at the date of the passing of the Act, £24,565,058, and at the commencement of the year 1906–7, £23,701,843 (page 2 of Paper 368 of Session 1897, and page 19 of Paper 321 of Session 1907). The average rates in the pound of the public rates payable in the years 1895–6 and 1906–7 in respect of agricultural land have not been separately ascertained. The total amount paid to local authorities during the year 1906–7 out of the annual grant under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, was £1,326,484. (page 181 of Paper Cd. 3665 of Session 1907). The spending authorities under the Act, when issuing precepts for contributions out of rates and when making rates, had to allow for the sum set out in the preceding paragraph. The sum appropriated during the year 1906–7 for the purposes of the Tithe Rent-Charge (Rates) Act, 1899, was £136,827 (page 19 of last-mentioned Paper). This sum was appropriated by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue out of the sums payable by them to the local taxation account. (Section 1 of Act of 1899).

Woolwich Arsenal.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St Andrews Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the reductions in His Majesty's Arsenal at Woolwich have reached the normal point aimed at, or whether further reductions are now in contemplation.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The numbers in the Arsenal have not reached the normal minimum proposed, but the gradual reduction to that minimum will be effected by wastage, and not by further discharges.

Army Horses.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the reason which led the Army Council to omit the ages of cavalry and horse and field artillery horses from the General Annual Report on the British Army, published in March last; and, whether, inasmuch as the number of horses of military age continues to be known to the Army Council, the policy can be reconsidered in publishing tables in the coming spring, and the number of horses fit for service given.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) These tables were omitted from the General Annual Report after careful consideration because they were not held to be of sufficient public or official interest to justify their retention. Owing to the recent reductions in the Unit Returns it would have been necessary to institute a special Return in order to obtain this information from India, as the Return in which it was formerly included has been abolished. At a time when every effort is being made to reduce the labour involved in the preparation of Returns I deprecate any reintroduction of such work. My right hon. friend will also doubtless recollect that a Committee of this House only recently urged strongly the necessity of reducing the size of Parliamentary publications, and the Return affords a case in point.

Imperial Yeomanry.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether non-commissioned officers and men now serving in the Imperial Yeomanry are to be allowed to complete their engagements upon the terms under which they enlisted, or whether they are required to re-enlist in the Territorial Force before 1st April, 1908, failing which they are to be compelled to take a free discharge from the Imperial Yeomanry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) With the exception of the Irish Yeomanry all desirous of continuing to serve will be required to enlist in the Territorial Force. If enrolled before 18th August, 1901, those who have not since come under the Militia and Yeomanry Act of 1901 may either serve for one year from 31st March, 1908, or sign for the full period under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act at their option. Those serving under the Act of 1901 may elect to serve for the term required to complete their present period of engagement, re-engagement, or re-enlistment, or they may sign for the full period under the Act of 1907. Non-commissioned officers and men who do not elect to sign a new attestation by 1st July next will be given free discharges, subject to the usual conditions as to delivery of arms, clothing, etc.

Yeomanry Training.

Mr. GUY WILSON (Hull): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether attendance at a garrison course for one month by men of the Yeomanry exempts them from attending the annual training in that year; and, if not, whether he will issue a regulation to this effect in order to encourage men to attend such courses.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This particular point in the future training of the Yeomanry is now under consideration.

Lady Recruiting Sergeant.

Mr. THORNE (West Ham, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that Colonel Walsh, head of the recruiting staff at St. George's Barracks, has appointed a lady recruiting sergeant, and that the authorities have sent her a recruiting sergeant's cockade; whether he has given his sanction to this; and, if so, will the lady recruiting receive the same salary as the male recruiting sergeants.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is quite true that a lady has been instrumental in sending candidates for enlistment to St. George's Barracks. The chief recruiting staff officer has, consistently with the recruiting regulations, considered her as entitled to be regarded as an agent. She does not receive the regimental pay and allowances of recruiting sergeants, but is paid the regular recruiting rewards given to all recruiting agents for successes. Colonel Walsh gave the lady, as a compliment, a recruiting rosette, a gift which has not involved any public expenditure. I think we may congratulate ourselves, especially at the present moment, when we find ladies selecting such useful ends for their great activities.

Casablanca Operations.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether an official representative of the War Office is watching the operations of the French and Spanish troops at Casablanca, with a view to acquiring that information which the special situation would naturally afford.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The reply is in the negative.

Volunteers and Politics.

Mr. KING (Cheshire, Knutsford): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that, on 9th January, postcards, signed T. Ll. Fennell, Captain 3rd V.B. Cheshire Regiment, were issued to all the men of the battalion, urging them to be present at a meeting convened by the Knutsford Working Men's Conservative Association for 13th January, to hear an address by Lord Newton in favour of compulsory military training; and whether such conduct on the part of a Volunteer officer is in compliance with the King's Regulations.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The facts are as stated, and notice has been taken of what was a contravention of the King's Regulations.

Adult Night-Messengers.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that adult night-messengers in provincial towns are not affected by the classification scheme, he can see his way to put into immediate operation the recommendations contained in the Hobhouse Committee Report as affecting these messengers.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The recommendations affecting adult night-messengers are being put into operation as from 1st January last.

German Naval Policy.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what battleships and armoured cruisers have been laid down by Germany since the beginning of 1907; on what dates were they laid down; what additional battleships and armoured cruisers are to be laid down this year; and whether the Admiralty is yet in a position to give the main armaments of the ships now being built, having regard to the fact that the last official Return describes the battleship armament as fourteen or sixteen 11-inch guns and the cruiser armament as ten or twelve 11-inch guns.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) It has been reported in the Press that four battleships and two armoured cruisers were laid down in Germany during 1907, but information as to the dates of laying down and types of armament has not yet been published by the German Government, and is therefore not available. The latest German Navy Bill provides that three battleships and one armoured cruiser should be commenced during the coming financial year.

Army Pensioner—Case of Cornelius O'Grady.

MR. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if his attention has been called to the case of Cornelius O'Grady, who was discharged from the Royal Artillery, London Division, in 1885 with a pension of 10d. a day, which pension was afterwards awarded for life; whether he is aware that subsequently the pension was reduced to 6d. a day and deduction made in respect of the ·10d. which had been previously paid; and will he say what was the reason for the deduction, and whether the full 10d. can be granted to O'Grady, or a compassionate allowance, in view of his advanced age, and the permanence of an injury to his elbow received while in the service.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Cornelius O'Grady was discharged on 21st July, 1885, after serving for five years and eight months, in consequence of an accidental injury to the right elbow joint. The Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital at the time of O'Grady's discharge appear to have regarded the case as one of "injury on duty," and awarded him 10d. a day for fifteen months conditional. At the end of that period (*i.e.*, in October, 1886) the pension was made permanent. In November, 1886, the Comptroller and Auditor-General challenged the rate, as the man had not been performing military duty when the accident took place, and the pension had to be reduced to 6d. from the date of the commencement of the permanent pension, involving the recovery of the excess for a period of about seventy days. It is regretted that the pension of 10d. a day cannot, under the regulations, be granted to O'Grady; but all the circumstances of the case are being thoroughly investigated.

London County Council and the Inebriates Act.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the recent decision of the London County Council for the discontinuance of their contributions to the national institutions under the Inebriates Act of 1898; whether this will deprive some 400 or 500 of the worst classes of inebriates of treatment at these institutions; and whether he has it in his power to take any steps to prevent the Act being rendered of no effect by this decision.

*(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have received with much regret a letter from the London County Council stating that the Council does not see its way to renew its contracts as regards females with the National Institutions for the Care and Reformation of Inebriate Persons. I would explain that, when the Inebriates Act of 1898 first came into force, absence of experience made it impossible to calculate the exact amount required by the managers of reformatories for the maintenance of inebriates. A sum of 10s. 6d. per head per week was decided upon as an experimental amount to be given to managers of reformatories by the Treasury, towards the maintenance of all cases committed under the Act, provided

local authorities also contributed from local funds. This Government contribution was guaranteed for three years, but was in fact continued without change for seven years. It was then decided that the experience which had been gained warranted a reduction in the Government grant. The accounts of seven out of the eight institutions in full working order during 1906 showed a maintenance cost varying from 10s. 4d. to 14s. per inmate per week, but the eighth, "Farmfield" (managed by the London County Council) was not conducted at less than a weekly rate of 18s. 6d. per head. It was felt that 14s. per week should be considered the total amount required for maintenance, and that the managers of reformatories should be induced to bring down their expenses to that sum per head, and in furtherance of the view that the segregation of inebriates relieved Imperial and local funds about equally, it was decided that the Government contribution should be reduced from 10s. 6d. to 7s. to correspond with the 7s. provided by local authorities. This reduction has been accepted as reasonable by the managers of reformatories, except in the case of the London County Council. At an early date after the passing of the Inebriates Act of 1898, the London County Council established a reformatory at Farmfield, near Horley, for the reception of 100 female inebriates. It soon became evident that more accommodation would be necessary, and the Council accordingly contracted with the National Institution for Inebriates for the reception of all female cases they were unable to receive at Farmfield, agreeing to pay 7s. per head per week for each case. The number of London women now under detention as the result of this contract considerably exceeds 500. In May last the London County Council decided to withdraw their contract with the National Institutions and restrict their work under the Inebriates Act to that carried on at Farmfield for 100 cases. The serious effect of this decision was pointed out to the Council, and eventually the Council offered to renew their contract for females, provided the Government grant of 10s. 6d. per head be reverted to for all cases committed under Section 2 of the Act and continued during the period of renewal of the contract. As such action by the Government would have supplied an unnecessary amount of money to the managers of institutions who did not need nor ask for any increase for the proper conduct of their work, and would have entailed a large increase of unjustifiable expenditure, the offer of the council was declined, and the contract with the national institutions has accordingly ceased. A few vacancies at Farmfield will probably be available from time to time, but these will be so few as practically to render the Act useless so far as London is concerned, and the step taken by the council will involve reversion to the discredited system of short and repeated terms of imprisonment as the only means of dealing with female inebriates, but no power exists by which the Council can be compelled to reverse its decision or make other adequate provision for the needs of females committed from within its administrative area.

Cost of Infantry Battalions.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office, what is the annual cost of maintaining an infantry battalion of the line on a war footing, allowing for interest and depreciation upon the cost of barracks, for the wages of officers and men, and a proportionate charge for training and pensions, for stores, repairs and renewals, and every other necessary item.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) My hon. friend is doubtless aware that no infantry battalion in this country or in the Colonies is maintained at war strength. The cost of a battalion at the war establishment of 1,007 (all ranks) at Home would be about £77,000 a year.

Irish Army Ordnance Department.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the chief administrative officer in Ireland of the Army Ordnance Department has ordered confidential registers to be kept of correspondence relating to certain matters of expenditure and personnel; and, if so, can he state the number of files of such correspondence so registered, and with what object this is being done.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Confidential registers are kept by this officer as by other officers in charge of departments. I do not think it would serve any useful purpose if I were to accede to the hon. Member's request.

Liability for Maintenance of Relatives.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he proposes during the present session so to amend the law relating to the maintenance of relatives as to provide that persons who have been served with an order to contribute to the support of a relative shall be liable on a second appearance for failure to comply with such order to imprisonment with hard labour.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I may refer to the Answer which I gave on 24th June last to a Question put to me on this subject by my hon. friend. As I then stated, I do not think that legislation should be proposed with regard to the matter pending the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law, who have before them the question of the contributions which should be made by persons for the support of their relatives.

Haydon Bridge—Registration of Births.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that the registrar of births and deaths for Haydon Bridge, Northumberland, lives at Allendale, a distance of seven miles from Haydon Bridge, which he only visits once a week; and whether arrangements more convenient for the inhabitants of Haydon Bridge cannot be made.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have communicated with the Registrar-General on this subject, and am informed by him that the births in the whole parish of Haydon average about one per week and the deaths about one per fortnight. The Allendale registrar of births and deaths, who is also relieving officer, attends at Haydon Bridge once in each week, and, in the circumstances, the Registrar-General considers that his hours of attendance there are sufficient for the requirements of the place. I may add that registration of death does not necessarily precede burial, so that registration of all deaths can take place at the weekly visits of the registrar.

Paupers in Workhouses.

MR. T. DAVIES (Fulham): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the average number of paupers in each of the workhouses of the unions within the administrative county of London in 1907, with the ratio of paupers per 1,000 of the population in each area.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The following table is compiled from the Returns made as to the number of paupers relieved on 1st January and 1st July, 1907. It shows the numbers of these persons in the workhouses, infirmaries, and other institutions provided by Poor Law authorities in London (except the establishments of the Managers of the Metropolitan Asylums District and the separate establishments for pauper children provided by boards of guardians), and the ratio per 1,000 of the population in 1901 of paupers of all classes.

Names of the Poor Law Unions.	Numbers of Paupers in Workhouses, Infirmaries, District Sick Asylums, and Homes for Aged Poor.		Ratio per 1,000 of Population (1901) of Paupers of all Classes (Indoor and Outdoor).	
	On 1st January 1907.	On 1st July 1907.	On 1st January 1907.	On 1st July 1907.
Bermondsey - - -	2,163	2,049	51·8	51·5
Bethnal Green - -	1,939	1,848	29·8	28·5
Camberwell - - -	2,710	2,503	36·6	34·8
Chelsea - - - -	1,268	1,136	36·5	32·7
City of London - -	851	681	61·8	54·3
Fulham - - - -	1,131	978	18·0	16·7
Greenwich - - -	2,050	1,757	33·1	30·9
Hackney - - -	2,561	2,401	31·1	27·5
Hammersmith - -	868	753	23·8	22·7
Hampstead - - -	416	360	10·9	10·7
Holborn - - -	3,395	2,856	56·1	50·5
Islington - - -	3,424	3,117	32·3	31·5
Kensington - - -	1,923	1,664	22·5	20·7
Lambeth - - -	2,764	2,400	27·6	26·1
Lewisham - - -	940	803	26·4	24·1
Mile End Old Town -	1,271	1,141	35·8	33·3
Paddington - - -	1,249	1,123	19·3	17·5
Poplar Borough - -	2,548	2,204	54·1	53·4
St. George in the East -	952	897	36·3	34·4
St. George's - - -	2,377	1,965	32·7	29·3
St. Giles and St. George, Bloomsbury - -	798	668	43·8	40·0
St. Marylebone - -	2,727	2,465	35·4	33·2
St. Pancras - - -	3,101	2,892	29·7	28·2
Shoreditch - - -	1,794	1,698	33·3	32·6
Southwark - - -	3,297	3,020	38·1	37·0

Name of the Poor Laws Unions.	Numbers of Paupers in Workhouses, Infirmaries, District Sick Asylums, and Homes for Aged Poor.		Ratio per 1,000 of Population (1901) of Paupers of all Classes (Indoor and Outdoor).	
	On 1st January 1907.	On 1st July 1907.	On 1st January 1907.	On 1st July 1907.
Stepney - - -	1,163	1,107	44·3	44·3
Strand - - - -	1,502	1,190	94·2	79·2
Wandsworth - - -	2,884	2,657	20·7	19·5
Westminster - -	565	486	30·2	27 5
Whitechapel - - -	1,592	1,255	34·5	29·9
Woolwich - - -	1,059	952	22·5	21·2

Small Dwellings (Acquisition) Act, 1899.

MR. HELME (Lancashire, Lancaster): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can state how many persons have taken advantage of the provisions of the Small Dwellings (Acquisition) Act, 1899, since it came into operation; and how many loans under the Act have been granted, respectively, in London and in the country.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As regards London the County Council have granted thirteen applications for advances under the Act, the amount advanced being £2,450. They have also sanctioned loans by the Metropolitan Borough Councils of sums amounting to £5,195 for twenty-seven advances. As regards the rest of England and Wales the Local Government Board have sanctioned loans amounting to £108,716 for advances under the Act. This sum is made up of £98,470, sanctioned in respect of 453 advances, and £10,246 in respect of applications for advances anticipated but not actually received when the loan was sanctioned. Twenty-three advances are known to have since been made out of this amount. I am not able to state the precise number of persons who have taken advantage of the Act.

Irish Ordnance Survey.

MR. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can state what means are adopted for the verification of the numbers employed of civilian employees in the Ordnance Survey (Ireland); who is immediately responsible for guarding the public interest in this respect; for what period are the records of payments to civilians and tradesmen, in connection with field parties or sections, retained, and where are they retained.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Complete lists are kept of every person employed on the survey and the signature of every person to whom pay is issued is obtained. It is the duty of the officers under whom the men are employed to satisfy themselves that the persons to whom pay is issued have been duly employed for the periods covered by the pay lists and at the authorised rates of pay. The vouchers for payments are forwarded to the Comptroller and Auditor-General, by whom they are retained for seven years.

Dangers of Invasion

MR. HAROLD COX: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the evidence given before the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers by the Director General of Mobilisation and Military Intelligence, to the effect that it was the view of the Admiralty that the Navy can guarantee the complete protection of the United Kingdom against the danger of invasion by any larger force than 5,000 to 10,000 men; whether this opinion attributed to the Admiralty by the Director-General of Mobilisation and Intelligence correctly expressed the views then held by the Admiralty; and whether the same views are still held.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The Answer to the first two Questions is in the affirmative; and, as regards the third Question, the matter is now being considered in the light of the most recent information, and it is not thought desirable to make any statement as to the numbers which may enter into the problem of defence.

Patent Office.

Mr. ESSEX (Gloucestershire, Cirencester): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the proposal to transfer certain persons of the taff of the Patent Office, London, to the proposed new branch in Manchester, he will see that provision is made for compensating such transferred persons for the losses they will necessarily incur by removal, etc.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Yes, Sir. These officers will receive suitable compensation for losses necessarily incurred through removal to Manchester.

On-Licensed Premises in London.

Mr. T. DAVIES: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can give the number of on-licensed premises in each of the metropolitan boroughs at the end of the year 1907, and the number of inhabitants per licensed house in each area.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The latest statistics of the nature desired by my hon. friend as to licensed premises in London relate to 31st March, 1907, and are to be found on page 198 of Volume XVII. of the series of "London Statistics" issued by the London County Council.

Extended Opening of Telegraph Offices.

Mr. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he has considered the advisability of allowing telegraph offices to be opened and telegrams sent after the official hour of closing at increased rates, and with due allowance to the staff for overtime work; and whether he will make this alteration, in view of the fact that often in cases of urgency, for example, illness or accident, persons living in country districts are greatly inconvenienced by the present arrangements.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) An arrangement such as that which the hon. Member suggests is in force, and is described at page 101 of the Post Office Guide.

Consols.

Mr. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could give the amount of 2½ per cent. Consols outstanding on 1st February this year and on 1st February, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The amount of 2½ per cent. Consolidated Stock outstanding on 1st February, 1907, was £584,095,405 2s. 6d. To give the corresponding figure on the 1st instant would involve giving information respecting debt reduction within the current financial year, for which I must ask my hon. friend to wait for the Budget Statement.

Law Estate, Ardmore.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the application in the case of the sale of the Law estate at Ardocheasty, near Ardmore, County Waterford, was lodged with the Estates Commissioners; whether an evicted tenant on the estate named Michael Gee has applied for reinstatement; and, if so, what steps have been taken for his restoration.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Proceedings for the sale of the property in question were instituted before the Estates Commissioners in December, 1906. An application for reinstatement has been received from Michael Gee, whose case has been referred to an inspector for inquiry.

Camolin Park, Wexford.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the Estates Commissioners propose to subdivide Camolin Park among county Wexford evicted tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners expect to be able, at an early date, to make a formal offer for the purchase of the property in question. If their offer should be accepted, they will at once make arrangements for the disposal of the untenanted land.

Ferns (Wexford) School.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how soon do the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland propose to allow the building of the proposed new school at Ferns, county Wexford, which work has now been six years delayed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education are awaiting a Report from the Board of Public Works as to the suitability of special plans for the building which were submitted in this case by the applicant, and estimates of the cost of building, enclosing, etc. The Board of Works have intimated to the Commissioners that they are in communication with the applicant's architect regarding some amendments which were required in the plans, and that they are taking steps to expedite the case.

Irish Labourers Holdings.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will insert provisions in his coming Land Purchase Amendment Bill to enable labourers to purchase their holdings from the Irish District Councils.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The question of legislation to the effect suggested by the hon. Baronet was very fully considered by the Government when the Labourers Bill was being framed, and was decided in the negative. The object of the Labourers Acts is to provide accommodation for persons working as agricultural labourers, and it would be undesirable, in the interests of the farmers and agriculturists generally, that labourers should be assisted to become the owners of their cottages and holdings. If they were enabled to purchase, there would be nothing to prevent them from selling or letting the cottages and plots to persons for whom they could not have been provided under the Acts. At present the labourer pays but a small rent, and his cottage is kept in repair for him; under the arrangement suggested in the Question he would have to pay a much higher annual charge in the shape of an instalment of the loan for sixty-eight and a half years in return for which he would have the prospect of being possessed of a cottage which might possibly be in ruins by the end of that time.

Marine Works in Ireland.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Government propose to introduce legislation this session to facilitate the construction of marine works on the south-east coast of Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The possibility of introducing legislation on the lines of the Navigation Works Bill of last session is under consideration.

Camolin Labourers Cottages.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have yet come to an agreement with the Gorey District Council as to the rebuilding of the labourers cottages in the village of Camolin, County Wexford; and, if not, how soon do they propose to send down their inspector to make final arrangements there.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have, through their inspector, been in negotiation with the Gorey Rural District Council in reference to the matter named in the Question, and the matter is pending.

Irish Historical Manuscripts.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what progress has been made with the publication of the Calendar of the Judiciary Rolls of Ireland, as well as of the Statutes and Ordinances of the early Parliaments and Great Councils of Ireland; and what collections of Irish historical manuscripts are now in course of publication by the Record and Historical Manuscripts Commissions.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The first volume of the Calendar of Justiciary Rolls of Ireland was published in June, 1906. The entire text of a second volume is in the printers' hands, more than half of it being in type. The first volume of the Statutes was published in July, 1907, and the second volume is in progress. Facsimiles of the set of Barony maps of the Down Survey in the French National Gallery were prepared in 1907, and are nearly ready for issue. For information as to the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission I must refer the hon. Baronet to my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury.

Kilmaine Estate, Castlebar.

DR. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what was the price paid by the Congested Districts Board for the Kilmaine Estate, near Castlebar, County Mayo; and if the annuities now about to be demanded will be 3½ per cent. on the purchase price.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The purchase price was £9,124. The estate has not yet been resold to the tenants. The annuity payable under the Irish Land Act, 1903, is 3¼ per cent. on the amount advanced.

Irish National Schools—Second Assistants.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if it is his intention to reduce the average for the second assistant in national schools to 85 this year.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) No proposal to the effect mentioned is at present under the consideration of the Government.

Belfast Spirit Grocers.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of prosecutions brought against spirit grocers in Belfast for offences against the Licensing Acts during the year ending 31st January, 1908, the number of these in which convictions were obtained, and the number of appeals lodged by the police against dismissals.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) During the twelve months ending 31st January, 1908, there were eighty-six prosecutions against spirit grocers in Belfast for breaches of the Licensing Acts. The number of convictions was thirty-six, and three cases stand adjourned. The police have no right of appeal against dismissals in such cases.

Blosse Estate, Mayo.

MR. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether the negotiations between the Congested Districts Board and Sir Henry Lynch Blosse, Baronet, Athavilla, Balla, County Mayo, for the purchase of the Blosse property have been concluded; and, if not, will he state what stage the negotiations have reached.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Congested Districts Board opened negotiations for the purchase of the property in question, but were obliged to suspend them because there was no immediate prospect of the Board being placed in funds to provide the purchase money or to carry out the necessary improvement works on the property.

Belfast Licensing Prosecutions.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that licensing prosecutions are heard at petty sessions in Belfast on Wednesdays and Thursdays; that, although almost 90 per cent. of the spirit grocers in the city habitually sell for consumption on the premises, contrary to the terms of their licence, and by partitions and utensils adapt their premises for this business, convictions are rarely obtained on the clearest police evidence; and that the police have in consequence almost ceased bringing forward such prosecutions; and whether he will consider the advisability of directing the police authorities to exercise the right of appeal against decisions of the local magistrates.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed that licensing prosecutions are heard in Belfast on Wednesdays and Thursdays. There is no evidence that any number approaching 90 per cent. of the spirit grocers in Belfast habitually sell for consumption on the premises. There were eighty-six prosecutions last year, and the total number of dealers is 442. Even assuming that each prosecution was against a different person, the number prosecuted was less than 20 per cent. It is the fact that in many cases temporary partitions have been erected in spirit grocers' shops, in such a way as to conceal persons who might be drinking on the premises. The police habitually make such matters a ground of objection to the renewal of the licence at the annual licensing sessions, and in every such case the justices have ordered the obstruction to be removed. The police authorities inform me that they have in no degree relaxed their vigilance in supervising these traders and in prosecuting for breaches of the law. The police have no right of appeal under the licensing laws in cases of dismissal.

De Montalt Estate, Tipperary.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say when the untenanted lands on the de Montalt estate, County Tipperary will be distributed among the applicants, especially among some local evicted tenants, such as the Dowling (Cappawhite) tenants, who were evicted in 1883.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The lands referred to in the Question have, at the request of the Estates Commissioners, been temporarily let up to the 1st April next, by which date the Commissioners hope to be in a position to take them over. It is proposed to provide for the Dowling evicted tenants upon the disposal of the lands.

Cambie Estate, Tipperary.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Francis Moore, evicted tenant on the Cambie estate near Templemore, County Tipperary, who was evicted in 1884, has applied to the Estates Commissioners for reinstatement in his old holding, which is still on the landlord's hands; and, if so what action, if any, has been taken by the Commissioners in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have duly considered an application which they received from Francis Moore, who seeks reinstatement as an evicted tenant from the estate mentioned in the Question. The Commissioners have placed the applicant's name on the list of persons suitable to work a holding, and the case is now in the hands of an inspector with a view to providing him with a holding.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Manning of the Navy.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what was the number of seamen, marines, and boys on the active list of the Navy on 1st October, 1905, and 1st January, 1908, respectively.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT, Devonshire, South Molton): One hundred and thirteen thousand nine hundred and forty-nine and 114,725 respectively.

Naval Cookery.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Committee appointed to consider the question of naval cookery has concluded its labours; and, if so, when its Report will be made available to Members of this House.

MR. GEORGE LAMBERT: The Committee has concluded its labours and its recommendations have been generally adopted after trial in selected ships. I am sending the hon. and gallant Member a copy of the Report, but I doubt whether it is of sufficient interest to justify its presentation to the House.

New Territorial Army—Separation Allowances.

MR. HARRISON-BROADLEY (Yorkshire, E.R., Howdenshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant separation allowances to married privates of the New Territorial Army, as he proposes to do in the case of the non-commissioned officers; and whether he has taken into consideration the fact that his failing to do so may have a deterrent effect upon the number of Volunteers who are expected to transfer after 31st March next.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for War whether non-commissioned officers only are entitled to separation allowance for their wives and families; and whether the like allowance is withheld from privates in the Territorial Army.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Married non-commissioned officers only will be granted separation allowances. The question of extending the grant to privates was very carefully considered, but the large expenditure involved was held to be prohibitive. It has also been hoped that the privilege of the grant of this allowance will prove an extra inducement to non-commissioned officers to do more than they have hitherto been able to do in the way of improving their military efficiency, and should help to remove any possible obstacle in the way of attendance at camp. I must point out that in the Regular Forces the married establishment is very restricted, and that the grant is quite a novel concession, as neither the Militia nor the Yeomanry were given it during training.

MR. HARRISON-BROADLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman state what the percentage of married men in the present Volunteer force is, and why we should draw a line of distinction between the married men in the Regular Forces and the married men enlisted under the New Territorial Army scheme?

MR. HALDANE: As I have said, the married establishment of the Regular Forces is very restricted. Moreover, those men are on duty all the year round, excepting their furlough, and separation from their wives is therefore a much more serious matter in their case than a separation for fifteen or eighteen days, as in the case of the men of the Territorial Force going into camp.

New Sword and Bayonet.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the new pattern sword and bayonet are satisfactory; and how many, so far, have been issued to the troops at home and abroad, respectively.

MR. HALDANE: The new pattern swords issued to regiments for trial last July have been reported on as satisfactory except in certain minor details, which are being altered. It is hoped shortly to get the pattern approved and commence manufacture. The new pattern bayonet is satisfactory and has been approved. Manufacture has commenced, but no bayonets are yet available for issue to the troops.

Second Battalion, Highland Light Infantry.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the 2nd Battalion Highland Light Infantry, whose headquarters are in Glasgow, are to be disbanded; whether he is aware that the members of that corps belong entirely to the artisan class; that last year that battalion had a larger increase in strength than any other of the Highland Light Infantry battalions; and, seeing that they have the most recently built headquarters in Glasgow, at the cost of £13,000, and that they have only recently incurred expense in changing their uniform to the kilt, whether he will provide for the retention of this battalion.

MR. HALDANE: As I explained to the House last Tuesday, I cannot at present state how far existing units will be affected by the new scheme, and I am therefore unable to answer the Questions concerning the future of this particular unit. The facts concerning the regiment are as stated in the Question.

Major's Retiring Allowances.

MR. G. A. HARDY (Suffolk, Stowmarket): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say why a combatant major should get a retiring allowance of £300 per annum on retiring at the age of forty-eight years, while a man who has risen from the ranks by sheer merit gets only £200 per annum on retirement as a major at the age of fifty-five years.

MR. HALDANE: The quartermaster when he retires at the age of fifty-five has on the average about fifteen years' commissioned service. His rank of Major is only an honorary one, and he rises to it automatically, an honorary majority being given after fifteen years' of commissioned service. Moreover, his duties remain practically the same throughout, no increase of responsibility following the rise in rank. A combatant major who retires at the age of forty-eight has averaged twenty-seven years' commissioned service. Unlike the quartermaster, each step of promotion he receives is followed by a considerable increase in his duties and responsibilities, and to attain it he has to pass a higher standard of examination at each succeeding step. I do not, therefore, think that a comparison on the lines made in the question can fairly be made.

Quartermaster's Retiring Allowances.

MR. G. A. HARDY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say whether anything can be done to better the retiring allowance of quartermasters who have attained the rank of honorary major.

MR. HALDANE: The question has been recently considered, but it has not been found practicable to take any step towards increasing the pay of these officers.

Army Service Corps.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what were the numbers of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, respectively, of the Army Service Corps serving with the colours on 1st October, 1905, and 1st January, 1908.

MR. HALDANE: The figures are as follow—

1st October, 1905.

	Officers.	Warrant Officers.	Sergeants.	Trumpeters.	Rank and File.	Total.
Home - - - -	308	214	778	64	4527	5891
Colonies - - -	134	49	210	8	652	1053
Total - - -	442	263	988	72	5179	6944

1st January, 1908.

	Officers.	Warrant Officers.	Sergeants.	Trumpeters.	Rank and File.	Total.
Home - - - -	325	209	777	64	4454	5829
Colonies - - -	116	45	207	7	570	945
Total - - -	441	254	984	71	5024	6774

The Royal Engineers.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what were the numbers of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, respectively, of the Royal Engineers serving with the colours on the 1st October, 1905, and the 1st January, 1908.

MR. HALDANE: The figures are as follow—

1st October, 1905.

	Officers.	Warrant Officers.	Sergeants.	Trumpeters.	Rank and File.	Total.
Home - - - -	487	102	904	91	5,384	6,968
Colonies - - -	227	45	428	46	2,661	3,407
India - - - -	340	—	3	—	—	343
Total - -	1,054	147	1,335	137	8,045	10,718

1st January, 1908.

	Officers.	Warrant Officers.	Sergeants.	Trumpeters.	Rank and File.	Total.
Home - - - -	458	100	858	90	4,763	6,269
Colonies - - -	193	44	366	20	2,126	2,749
India - - - -	382	—	3	—	—	385
Total - -	1,033	144	1,227	110	6,889	9 403

Malta Fever.

MR. MALLET (Plymouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware of the public service rendered by a Commission of the Royal Society, at the request of the War Office and the Admiralty, in discovering the cause of Malta fever, from which many hundreds annually of our soldiers and sailors on that island till recently suffered; and whether, in view of the importance of this discovery in the annals of preventive medicine, inasmuch as at the present moment the disease has been entirely stamped out, he will consider the desirability of giving the thanks of the Government to the Royal Society for this instance of the successful application of British scientific research.

MR. HALDANE: I am aware of the great service rendered by the Commission in question. The Commission's investigations and the adoption of preventive measures as the outcome of its recommendations have been followed by the practical disappearance of Malta fever from the garrison of the Island. I think that the Royal Society is well aware how genuine is the appreciation of the Government. We owe much to the Royal Society's Commission for the successful issue of this remarkable investigation, and for the excellent results which have followed. These results illustrate the enormous importance of bringing science into our business of government.

Artillery Ranges.

MR. GUY BARING (Winchester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether County Associations will be required to provide ranges for the Artillery under their command.

MR. HALDANE: The whole question of the provision of Artillery ranges is under consideration.

Attestation Forms.

MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the new attestation which has been prepared for the Territorial Force, and to the character of the provisions which are embodied in the form, and, in particular, to the requirement as to medical inspection; and whether, in view of the direction previously given that no Volunteer or Yeoman at present serving need undergo fresh medical inspection on joining the Territorial Forces, he proposes to amend the attestation in question.

MR. HALDANE: The form of attestation has been carefully considered with a view to ensuring that the maximum possible liability of the Territorial soldier under the new terms of service should be set out in a perfectly unmistakable manner. Under the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act the Territorial soldier becomes liable to the provisions of the Army Act dealing with enlistment and false answer on attestation, as has been the case with regard to the Yeomanry, since 1901, and it is right that this should be clearly stated. I may state, however, that I am about to constitute an influential and representative Advisory Council to deal with questions affecting the Territorial Forces, and it will have an opportunity of considering the attestation form before it becomes necessary to use it. With regard to medical inspection, it was made quite clear in the leaflet issued some time ago that no Yeoman or Volunteer transferring into a Force of the same Arm will be required to undergo fresh medical inspection, and there is no intention of departing from this. Medical inspection is, however, required in the case of a man transferring from foot to mounted service, but in that case only. As there has been some misunderstanding as to the alteration in the form of oath from that previously taken by Volunteers, I may add that the form has been changed merely in order to avoid the inconvenience of taking from the Territorial soldier a fresh engagement if he volunteers for foreign service. It has been made quite clear in the leaflets issued that the Territorial soldier will, as heretofore, be under no liability for service beyond the United Kingdom unless he voluntarily undertakes it, but should he do so, this form of oath will save him from being re-attested.

MR. BENNETT asked the right hon. Gentleman if, seeing the dissatisfaction caused by the new form of attestation, he would order its withdrawal and substitute one better calculated to secure recruits.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked the right hon. Gentleman if he would amend also the provision which imposed a penalty of £5 for non-compliance with certain regulations as to efficiency which had not yet been issued.

MR. HALDANE said the attestation form would not, and could not, be used for some six weeks yet, when the transfer took place, so that there was plenty of time to consider it. The attestation form was in compliance with the statute and set out the maximum liability, though whether it was drawn up in the most perfect fashion was one of the matters which would be referred to the Advisory Council. He perceived that there was some difference of opinion about the form of attestation in the North, and especially in Scotland, some Volunteer forces glorying in the new attestation, because it showed the reality of what was being asked of them, and they contrasted very favourably with the softer and more timorous attitude further South.

Lord BALCARRES: Will the form be withdrawn until the Advisory Council has reported?

Mr. HALDANE: No, Sir, but it cannot be used until the new force comes into existence, which will be at the end of the financial year.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Huntingdonshire, Huntingdon) invited the right hon. Gentleman to make it quite clear on the face of the attestation that the omission of the words "in Great Britain" would not imply any liability on the Territorial Force to serve outside the United Kingdom.

Mr. HALDANE: I have no difficulty in making that quite clear. The statute makes it abundantly plain that a man cannot be called upon to serve outside the United Kingdom.

Mr. BENNETT: Are we to understand it will not be used until it has been considered?

Mr. HALDANE: I have said I am referring the whole question to the Advisory Council, and it will not be used until that body has reported.

Disbandment of Militia Battalions.

Mr. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is now finally decided to disband the twenty-three Militia battalions detailed in the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, thereby removing these historic battalions from the establishment and, in some cases, allowing others of less efficiency to become reserve battalions, or whether he could see his way in these cases to amalgamate the two battalions of a county under a neutral name, giving equal rights to the officers and non-commissioned officers of the two battalions according to seniority, and thereby avoiding the soreness and dissatisfaction that now prevails in the battalions that are to be disbanded.

Mr. HALDANE: The disbandment of these Militia battalions is quite finally decided. Steps have already been taken to dispose of the men belonging to them. All the officers, with the exception of the Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding, may, with their own consent, be attached to a remaining Militia battalion of the same regiment, or in certain circumstances to a battalion of another regiment. With regard to a neutral or a combined county title name being given to Militia battalions converted into Reserve battalions, the Army Council are prepared to consider any proposals which may be put forward.

Lady Army Recruiting Agent.

Mr. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he intends to allow Mrs. Paterson, the lady recruiting agent, to wear the recruiting rosette given to her by Colonel Walsh for recruiting purposes; and whether the lady agent has been properly drilled and instructed by the chief recruiting officer, consistent with the Recruiting Regulations, to make her a fit person to act on behalf of the War Office as a recruiting agent.

Mr. HALDANE: I see no reason why this lady should not wear the rosette which Colonel Walsh gave her. Recruiting agents are not drilled or instructed. Any individual soldier or civilian who brings a recruit to a recruiter or to a military barrack is considered a recruiting agent.

Natal Native Affairs Commission.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is intended to circulate the evidence taken by the Native Affairs Commission of the Natal Government; or, if that be not possible, can a copy of the document be placed in the Library for the use of Members.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.): The Volume of Evidence contains over 1,000 pages, and the cost of circulating it as a Parliamentary Paper would be excessive. I therefore propose to place two copies in the Library for the use of hon. Members and trust they will be found sufficient.

The Congo.

Sir FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Reports of the British Consuls in the Congo State of later date than the last Blue-book will be placed in the hands of Members in the course of the present week; and whether he will accelerate the issue of these Papers before the discussion on the affairs of the Congo is reached on the 26th instant.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden): My right hon. friend will expedite the issue of the Papers as much as possible and hopes they will be ready before the 26th.

Ben Nevis.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can hold out any prospect of a grant towards the upkeep of the observatory on Ben Nevis.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): I explained, in answer to a Question by my hon. friend the Member for Inverness, on 1st August last, that the only scheme which has up to the present been placed before me is one under which the whole cost of the re-equipment and maintenance of the observatories would be thrown upon public funds, and to this I should not feel justified in assenting. I am, however, quite prepared to consider the question of renewing the Government grant which was for many years given to these institutions through the Meteorological Council, provided that an adequate contribution towards their re-establishment and maintenance is forthcoming from other sources. So far as I am aware, there has been no change in the position since that date.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: What does the right hon. Gentleman consider "adequate provision"?

Mr. ASQUITH: I have laid that down quite clearly.

Mr. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Does the right hon. Gentleman approve the policy of the late Government in discontinuing the grant?

Mr. ASQUITH: I express no opinion on that.

Offal Tobacco Drawback.

Mr. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the total quantity of offal tobacco on which drawback was paid from April to December, 1907, both months inclusive.

Mr. ASQUITH: The total quantity of offal tobacco upon which drawback was paid from April to December, 1907, both months inclusive, was 6,656,666 lbs.

Infantile Mortality.

Mr. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many infants of the 1,060 who met their death last year from overlaying were born of parents who live in one and two-room tenements in England and Scotland.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland): I presume the hon. Member refers to a statement made by myself on the introduction of the Children Bill. The number of deaths then mentioned in this connection was 1,600. These figures were obtained from the Registrar General's Reports, but the Secretary of State has no source of information from which to give the further particulars asked for in this Question.

Limerick Competitions.

Mr. BYLES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether th investigations of the Commissioners of Police, to whom the subject of "Limerick" competitions was referred by the late Attorney-General, have led to any results; and whether it is now found that the prizes are chosen haphazard, and that the so-called competition is a lottery within the statute and a fraud upon the competitors, to whom it is represented that the discrimination will be exercised upon a basis of comparative merit.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The Commissioner of Police has for some time been giving his attention to the question of these competitions, but he is advised that proceedings cannot be taken against the promoters with any hope of success under the Lottery Acts; and, where fraud has been suspected, the police, who have not access to the offices where the competitions are conducted, have been unable to obtain the evidence which would be necessary for a prosecution. The whole question of these and similar newspaper competitions is, however, receiving the careful consideration of the Government.

The Aliens Act.

MR. BYLES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, does the expenditure of the current financial year, estimated at £11,400, cover the entire cost of administering the Aliens Act, including the services of the police; and if not, can he inform the House how much altogether the administration of this Act is costing the country.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The figures which the Secretary of State has already given to the House represent the most accurate statement which can be made of the cost of administering the Aliens Act. No payment on account of the Act is made to the police for their services, which are rendered as part of their ordinary duty, but out-of-pocket expenses necessarily incurred by them in arranging at the Secretary of State's request for the expulsion of aliens are reimbursed. These expenses are included in the sum of £11,400 already mentioned.

West Sussex Chief Constable and Brewery Shares.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that the name of Captain G. R. B. Drummond, of Horsham, appears on the published list of one of the brewery debenture holders' committees, formed to protect the interests of the holders of debentures secured upon breweries; and whether, seeing that this gentleman is chief constable of West Sussex, and an official responsible for the administration of the licensing laws, he will say what action he proposes to take in view of his membership of a political organisation for the protection of the liquor trade.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The Secretary of State is informed by the chief constable in question that he has had for many years a small amount of capital invested in the debentures of a brewery not connected with the county of Sussex, and that a few months ago he accepted an invitation from the Chairman of the Law Debenture Corporation—an association engaged in the protection of the interests of brewery debenture holders—to allow his name to appear on a local committee. The chief constable states that in view of his position he takes no personal part in any political organisation or meetings. The Secretary of State certainly thinks Major Drummond would have been better advised if he had refused the invitation, but he has no authority to give him any instructions in the matter.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): Will the hon. Gentleman cause a copy of the Answer to be sent to this gentleman?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: Yes, Sir.

Imprisonment for Debt.

MR. LEA: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the number of men and women who were imprisoned for debt in Great Britain and Ireland during 1907.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The number of men and women committed by County Courts as debtors, and imprisoned as such in England and Wales during 1907 were 8,658 and 104 respectively. The Secretary of State has no figures as regards Scotland and Ireland.

MR. LEA: Can the hon. Gentleman hold out any hope that the Government will take any steps to bring in a Bill dealing with this question?

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: I think my right hon. friend has already answered that Question.

Flogging in Prisons.

MR. LEA: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the prison numbers and initials of men and boys who were flogged in local and convict prisons in Great Britain and Ireland during 1907, and in each case to specify the nature of the offence; the number of lashes inflicted; and also in each case to specify whether he had refused to confirm the sentence of flogging or had reduced the number of lashes awarded.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The hon. Member will find the particulars he mentions for the year ended 31st March last in the last Report of the Prison Commissioners, and a similar Return for the year ending 31st March next will be published in their next Report. Scottish and Irish Prisons do not come within the Secretary of State's jurisdiction.

Railway Siding Accidents.

*MR. MADDISON (Burnley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that over 5,000 employees, mainly engaged in coupling and uncoupling vehicles and other shunting operations, in private sidings connected with factories, workshops, and docks have been killed or injured since 1897; if he is aware that no separate Returns of these accidents are made to Parliament; and whether he will cause a tabulated Return of such accidents to be made in future, as is done by the Board of Trade for public railways, showing each year how many employees are killed and injured in coupling and uncoupling, and other like headings, when engaged in shunting operations.

MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: The figures of accidents caused by locomotives or other moving railway plant on premises under the Factory Act are not available for the period named in the Question, but the total of such accidents in the records of the Factory Department for the five years 1902 to 1906, is 2,802. The Secretary of State would explain, however, that this figure does not represent the full number of these accidents on premises under the Factory Act. Accidents caused by the movement of vehicles on public lines in docks, railway locomotive sheds and railway warehouses are also reportable to the Board of Trade, and by arrangement with that Department any notices of such accidents received by the Factory Inspectors are referred to and dealt with by that Department, and do not appear on the records of the Factory Department. The Secretary of State will be glad to bear in mind the suggestion of my hon. friend as to a more detailed classification of accidents on private lines and sidings being given in the annual Report, but in the limited time available for the preparation of that Report it is not possible with the staff at the disposal of the Chief Inspector for the purpose to carry the analysis of particular classes of accidents into great detail and all that can be done is from time to time to select a particular class for special treatment. A detailed list of locomotive accidents in 1900 will be found in the Report for that year.

*MR. MADDISON suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should follow the tables given in the Board of Trade returns of railway accidents.

London County Council and the Inebriates Act.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the recent decision of the London County Council for the discontinuance of their contributions to the national institutions under the Inebriates Act of 1898; whether this will deprive some 400 or 500 of the worst classes of inebriates of treatment at these institutions; and whether he has it in his power to take any steps to prevent the Act being rendered of no effect by this decision.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL: My right hon. friend is anxious to give a full reply to this Question, and as it is too lengthy for an oral reply, it will be circulated with the Votes to-morrow.

Newbury Station, G.W. Railway.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the result of the inquiry into the condition of the Great Western Railway station at Newbury which he promised to make in July last; and what steps have been taken by the railway company in consequence of it.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): Colonel Yorke visited this station in August last and reported that the accommodation was quite inadequate for the present traffic. The Board of Trade were informed that the Company had already approved plans for the reconstruction of the station on the most modern lines at an estimated cost of £60,000, but there have been difficulties in the way of the acquisition of the necessary land. These difficulties have now I understand been removed and the work is being put in hand at once.

L. and S.W. Railway Signalmen.

SIR GEORGE KEKEWICH (Exeter): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that signalmen on the London and South Western Railway, employed at various stations out of London, are permitted to proceed to Waterloo Station after a full night's signalling work, and to act as porters at that station during the day; and whether, in view of the effect of such employment on the health of the men and the danger involved to the travelling public, he will take measures to put an end to it.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am informed by the Railway Company that the practice to which my hon. friend refers is a voluntary one on the part of the men. If, however, my hon. friend can supply me with any information supporting the suggestion in the last part of his Question I shall be glad to consider it.

Manning of the Mercantile Marine.

MR. T. DAVIES (Fulham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the number of British-born and the number of foreigners engaged on British ships in 1897, 1903, and 1907 respectively.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The figures for the year 1907 are not yet available, but those for 1897, 1903, and 1906 are as follows:—

Year.	Other than Lascars and Asiatics.		Lascars and Asiatics.
	Number of British persons employed.	Number of Foreign persons employed.	
1897	175,549	33,898	31,484
1903	176,520	40,396	41,021
1906	188,340	38,084	44,367

Lunatics in Workhouses.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will this session introduce legislation extending the grant of 4s. weekly, now made under the Local Government Act of 1888, in respect of each lunatic maintained in a lunatic asylum to imbeciles and lunatics certified for treatment in workhouses.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): As I have stated in reply to previous Questions, this matter will receive consideration when the question of local taxation is dealt with by the Government. I could not promise to introduce legislation with regard to it during the present session.

Taxation of Land Values.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the results of the single tax on land values as applied to local taxation in Queensland as stated in Cd. 3890, and in particular to the statement of the Under Secretary to the Treasury that the exemption of improvement from taxation has a tendency to encourage building operations; and whether he intends to consider this side of the question in the Housing Bill he proposes to introduce.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have seen the paper and statement referred to. I am afraid I must defer giving any information respecting the Bill to amend the Housing of the Working Classes Acts until the Bill is introduced.

Traffic and Accidents.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the numbers of motor cars registered and licences issued in the United Kingdom at the end of 1906 and 1907, and, if possible, the number of horse-drawn vehicles as well; the number of applications for speed limits made by local authorities, and the number of regulations granted up to date; and the number of accidents caused in London, and, if possible, in the United Kingdom, by motor vehicles and horse-drawn vehicles respectively in 1907.

MR. JOHN BURNS: The latest figures as to the number of motor cars registered and drivers' licences issued in the United Kingdom are those given in the Appendix to the Report of the Royal Commission on Motor Cars. They show that on the 30th September, 1905, there were 74,038 registered motor cars and motor cycles and that there were 95,836 drivers' licences in force. I understand, however, that the number of private motor cars and motor cycles upon which licence duties were paid was 67,115 in 1906 and 76,567 in 1907. I have no information as to the total number of horse-drawn vehicles, but for the financial year 1906–7 the number of these vehicles, excluding hackney and stage carriages, upon which licence duty was paid was 413,000. The total number of applications made to the Local Government Board by local authorities in England and Wales for the imposition of speed limits since the Motor Car Act, 1903, came into operation is 103. Of these applications forty-nine have been withdrawn or abandoned, and nineteen have been refused; in twenty-two cases orders prescribing speed limits have been granted or promised, and thirteen are now under consideration. The number of accidents from vehicles in the United Kingdom cannot be given, but figures which have been supplied to me by the Home Office in relation to the Metropolitan Police District show that in 1907 the number of accidents reported to the Metropolitan Police were as respects motor vehicles 16,010, and with respect to horse-drawn vehicles 21,415. Of the former 5,328 were due to mechanically propelled tramcars, and 4,723 to motor omnibuses.

Unskilled Labour.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state, for the United Kingdom, the numbers of unskilled working men at the censuses of 1881 and 1901, and their proportions per 1,000,000 adult males at the censuses.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have communicated with the Registrar General on this subject so far as England and Wales are concerned. He points out that the occupations are not given in the Census Reports of 1881 and 1901 in such a way as to enable a distinction to be drawn between skilled and unskilled working men.

Dust Nuisance on Main Roads.

MR. G. CLARK (Belfast, N.): On behalf of the hon. Member for Mid. Armagh, I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has arrived at any conclusion respecting the powers of rural district councils to contribute to the cost of spraying with tar the main roads within their districts as a means of mitigating the dust nuisance.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have given attention to this matter. I am advised that the experience hitherto obtained of the effect of spraying roads with tar does not show that the operation would necessarily be of such a character as to constitute an improvement of the roads within the meaning of Section 3 of the

Highways and Bridges Act, 1891. It is only where this is the case that a rural district council could contribute towards the cost.

Sailors and the Franchise.

MR. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give any information as to the intentions of the Government in the matter of mariners' votes; and whether, in view of the fact that sailors are at present practically disfranchised, he can give any promise to introduce legislation to remove their disabilities, or at least to appoint a Committee to consider and report on the subject.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. It would be difficult to deal with the case of mariners apart from that of other classes of persons who are absent from home on duty on the polling day. It would not be practicable for the Government to introduce legislation on the subject during the present session, and I could not promise that they would propose the appointment of a Committee with regard to it, but the suggestion that they should do so will receive consideration.

MR. CATHCART WASON asked if a Committee had not already inquired into the subject and what were its recommendations.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I cannot charge my memory.

AN HON. MEMBER: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of including in any legislation such classes as commercial travellers and railway drivers?

MR. JOHN BURNS: That is the type of persons to whom my Answer refers.

Telegraph Poles.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether larch for telegraph poles is now purchased abroad; whether he is aware that suitable poles are available in Wales in the necessary quantities; and whether he will consider the advisability of purchasing such poles in Wales.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Telegraph poles are at present purchased abroad, and are of red fir. Attempts have been made from time to time to obtain supplies of suitable home-grown timber, but hitherto without success. I am anxious to utilise home-grown timber if suitable poles can be obtained, and at a reasonable price. With this object I recently communicated with the authorities and persons interested in the matter, and invited tenders from all parts of the country. The result was disappointing, and the only order I have been able to place at present is with a Welsh firm for a small number of larch poles. If the hon. Member can give me the names of any persons prepared to supply suitable poles, I shall be glad to invite tenders from them.

SIR ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has considered the advisability of purchasing suitable fir poles grown in large quantities in the New Forest Crown inclosures?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the poles are to be had at a reasonable price I will gladly consider any tender.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): Are we to understand that no higher price will be paid for poles in order to favour a particular constituency?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is merely a question of tender.

Ferro-Concrete Telegraph Poles.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, whether, in view of his difficulty in obtaining home-grown telegraph poles he will consider the desirability of using ferro-concrete poles made of English cement and English iron.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Post Office engineers have this matter under consideration.

The Hobhouse Committee on Post Office Servants.

MR. T. DAVIES: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether it is his intention to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants in all particulars.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have announced in a notice to the Post Office staff, dated 14th instant the changes, following the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants, which it is proposed to make in the pay and conditions of service of those classes in the Post Office which were represented before the Committee, excepting sub-postmasters. I am now dealing with the question of the sub-postmasters and the smaller classes which were not represented.

Rural Postmen and Sunday Labour.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the number of postmen who are employed in the country districts in Scotland on the Sabbath; the number of country post offices open on the Sabbath; if he can state approximately the cost to the country of such Sabbath work; and whether, in view of the cost to the country of this service and the small public advantage gained by it, he will take into consideration the expediency of relieving the country of the charge, and of granting to a number of public servants their Sabbath Day rest.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: To obtain a return of the number of rural postmen who are employed in the country districts of Scotland on Sunday, and of the number of country post offices open on that day, would involve considerable expense. But I may repeat the statement which I made in answer to my hon. friend's question of the 28th of June, 1906, that there are comparatively few Sunday posts in rural districts in Scotland, and that they are laid out with a view of minimising Sunday labour. My desire is to discourage and not to encourage Sunday labour in the Post Office, and the wishes of those postmen who desire exemption from Sunday work are complied with as far as practicable. If any district which at present has a Sunday delivery desires it to be discontinued, and if the local authorities are prepared to move the matter, I shall be glad to give instructions accordingly I may add that only the other day the Glasgow Corporation as a result of representations made to them agreed that in the future there need be no Sunday delivery and that the calling for letters on that day should cease.

MR. CATHCART WASON: When a postal delivery extends into the area of a number of authorities which is the "local authority" to be approached?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON was understood to say that as a rule all local authorities were under the control of one body which could consider the matter.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Does the right hon. Gentleman's answer apply to Ireland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Certainly.

Foot and Mouth Disease at Rotterdam.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can now say whether hay from Rotterdam has been the cause of the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease amongst cattle in the district of Edinburgh; and, if so, whether he has taken any steps to prevent the importation of hay into the United Kingdom from foreign countries with the view to prevent the outbreak of such disease in the future.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): There is evidence that hay imported from Rotterdam was the medium by which foot-and-mouth disease was recently introduced into Scotland, but our inquiries on the subject are not yet complete. The general question is receiving very careful consideration but no decision has yet been arrived at.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Is there any foot-and-mouth disease among cattle at Rotterdam at present?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: So far as I am aware, all over the Netherlands there is foot-and-mouth disease at the present time.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Having regard to this fact, will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to prevent hay or any other forage coming in from that country?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: As I have already informed the House, the whole matter is receiving careful consideration.

Milk-Blended Butter.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can say under what name is milk-blended butter sold with the approval of the Board of Agriculture, in accordance with the Butter and Margarine Act, 1907, when it contains more than 16 per cent., and under 24 per cent. of water; and whether, under the Act, there is any change in the description of margarine when offered for sale to the public.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Nineteen names have up to the present time been approved by the Board for milk-blended butter. The law as to the manner in which margarine is to be described was amended by Section 8 of the Act to which the hon. Member refers.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Is it a fact that one of the names used for this butter is "Pearks's Own?"

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Yes.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Having regard to the fact that a firm of the name of Pearks & Co. (Ltd.) sell this article as "Pearks's Own," are not the Board of Agriculture giving preference to this firm; furthermore, is the Board of Agriculture an advertising agency for this firm?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The hon. Member must give notice of that Question.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): Is it a fact that when people inquire for butter—[A NATIONALIST MEMBER: They sometimes get margarine"]—they receive the answer from retail shopkeepers that they can sell them "Pearks's Own," which implies that it is butter; and whether it is not an evasion of the new Act?

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: In view of the similarity between "Pearks & Co." and "Pearks's Own" will the hon. Gentleman take steps to change the name of milk-blended butter?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I will represent the opinion of the hon. Member to the President of the Board of Agriculture.

Wheat Growing in the United Kingdom.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, how many acres were planted with wheat in the United Kingdom in the past year; and what was the total quantity of wheat produced.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The acreage under wheat in the United Kingdom in 1907 was 1,663,579 acres and the total production 7,066,399 quarters.

Foot and Mouth Disease in Midlothian.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can say whether the sale of live stock has been stopped in the markets at Edinburgh owing to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the district; and, if so, whether having regard to the fact that this will be a serious loss to the cattle trade, he will take immediate steps to see that the sales be allowed to continue.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. We are aware that the closing of the markets entails loss upon all concerned, but it was imperative that every possible means should be taken to prevent the spread of the disease, and at the moment it would not be safe further to modify our orders on the subject. The outlook is however promising, and the restrictions will gradually be withdrawn so soon as we can prudently do so.

County Courts.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this session relating to county courts.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields): Last year the Lord Chancellor introduced a Bill on this subject in the other House, and should a favourable opportunity offer this session he is likely to introduce another.

Government Advertisements.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether some years ago the Treasury issued to public Departments a list of newspapers from which all Conservative and Unionist journals were excluded, with instructions that official advertisements were to be sent only to the papers mentioned in the list; and whether any modification of this list was made when the late Government came into power.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. GEORGE WHITELEY, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey): I am not answerable for the actions of my predecessors, nor have I the necessary documents to enable me to ascertain the historical facts. If the hon. Member will exert his influence to obtain for me a copy of the list of newspapers issued by the late Government, of which there is no trace on the official files, I shall be very pleased to scrutinise it and give him my opinion upon it.

Boy Clerkships.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that statistics show that the great majority of boy clerkships fall to boys who have their homes in London or Dublin, on account of the necessity of their living in these cities; and whether he will consider the advisability of not granting these boys the privilege of service marks in all open competitions for the Excise and Customs Departments throughout the United Kingdom, to the detriment and loss of boys from Glasgow and other large towns.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The Secretary to the Treasury sees no sufficient reason for the course suggested by my hon. friend. I understand that of the boy clerks who were successful at the competitions held in May and September, 1907, 61 per cent. had their homes in London and the neighbourhood, or in Dublin. Of the successful candidates in the four competitions held in 1907 for assistantships of Excise and assistantships of Customs, sixty-one received service marks, and of these twenty-four only had their homes in London and the suburbs or in Dublin at the time they became boy clerks. Service marks are regarded not as an advantage bestowed on boy clerks over other candidates for public appointment, but as a compensation to those boys for the difficulties under which their studies are carried on owing to the public duties discharged by them.

Case of Alexander Noble.

*MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the case of Alexander Noble, 84, Shamrock Street, Glasgow, who was sentenced on 5th December last by Sheriff Boyd to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour for simple assault; whether he is aware that twelve of the jury have written expressing extreme surprise and regret at the severity of the sentence; and, whether, in the circumstances, he can see his way to liberate the man.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): My attention was called to this case recently and after full investigation of the circumstances directions were given to reduce the period of imprisonment to six months. Offences of this kind have been unduly prevalent in certain districts, and a sentence of some severity was deemed necessary.

*MR. WATT: Is the Secretary for Scotland aware that this man was charged with attempt to rob, that the jury found him not guilty of that charge and that had this charge not been instituted the maximum penalty would have been sixty days, as he would have been tried in another Court?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I can only assure the hon. Member that I have inquired very carefully into the circumstances of this case, and I believe the decision I have arrived at meets the necessities of it.

Athenry Outrage Compensation.

Mr. MOORE (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if it is the intention of the Treasury to remit the whole or part of the sum of £425 recently awarded by the Recorder and County Court Judge of Galway to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland for malicious injury to the property of the Department near Athenry, in the county of Galway.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): Perhaps I may be permitted to answer this Question on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, to whom it has been referred by my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury. An appeal against the award referred to in the Question has been lodged by the county council, and will be heard at the forthcoming Galway Assizes. The matter is therefore *sub judice*.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease Precautions in Ireland.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) if he is making any inquiries into the cause of the foot-and-mouth disease among cattle in Scotland, with the view of having the disease kept out of Ireland; and, if so, can he say to what it is attributed.

Mr. CHERRY: The Department understand that inquiries are being made in this matter by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and that so far as the inquiries have gone they point to the probability of infection having been conveyed in some hay of Dutch origin which was used as litter for the animals. The question as to whether any risk of a like character exists as regards Ireland is engaging attention.

Lord Ashtown and his Tenants.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an evicted tenant named Carrigan, on Lord Ashtown's estate, county Waterford, has made application for reinstatement to the Estates Commissioners, and that Lord Ashtown has planted and is planting trees on this farm formerly occupied by Carrigan; have the Estates Commissioners sent an inspector to inspect this farm and report, among other matters, whether the tree planting is being continued; and will he take steps to provide for the Estates Commissioners preventing Lord Ashtown from planting trees on this farm, thereby defeating the object of last session's legislation on the evicted tenants question, while negotiations for the reinstatement of the evicted tenant are proceeding, having regard to the general peace of the district.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have received an application from an evicted tenant named Carrigan for reinstatement in a holding on Lord Ashtown's estate, county Waterford. The Commissioners have also received a report from their inspector to the effect that Lord Ashtown has been planting the lands with trees. The matter is at present under consideration.

Mr. POWER: Have the Estates Commissioners power to prevent landlords like Lord Ashtown thus obstructing the working of the Act while negotiations are pending?

Mr. CHERRY: I am afraid not.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Was not Lord Ashtown supplied with these trees by the Agricultural Department under the Plunkett *regime*?

Mr. CHERRY: I cannot say.

Belfast Health Commission.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any

Report has yet been received from the Health Commission which recently sat in Belfast; or, if not, when is the Report likely to be published.

MR. CHERRY: The Report has not yet been received, but I am informed by the Chairman of the Commission that it may be expected early next month.

Evicted Tenants in County Wicklow.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many evicted tenants were in the county Wicklow on 31st December, 1904; how many, if any, were restored to their holdings or to other holdings in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907: how many claims to restoration have been rejected by the Estates Commissioners; and whether he could give the names of the rejected claimants, and the names of their landlords.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners are at present preparing for presentation to Parliament the Return prescribed by Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, which will contain particulars of all cases of the restoration of evicted tenants. I must ask the hon. Member to await the appearance of that Return. It would be undesirable to divert the Commissioners' staff to the preparation of Returns relating to particular districts.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: When will the Return be ready?

MR. CHERRY: In a month or two; I cannot say definitely.

Kenmare Evicted Tenants.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what steps the Estates Commissioners have taken to effect the reinstatement of the evicted tenants on the Kenmare estate, county Kerry, and when there is likely to be any result of their action.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the cases of evicted tenants from the Kenmare estate, and are informed that three have recently been restored and six others will probably be restored by the landlord. In two cases the evicted holdings are stated to have been added to the landlord's demesne, and in eight cases the holdings are occupied by new tenants. In these cases the Commissioners are considering the possibility of providing holdings for the evicted tenants elsewhere.

MR. J. MURPHY: Have not the Estates Commissioners power to negotiate with grabbers with a view to reinstating evicted tenants?

MR. CHERRY: I think they have the power, but it is a very difficult thing to do.

MR. J. MURPHY: No, it is very easy. Will the right hon. Gentleman represent its practicability to the Commissioners?

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners are most anxious to restore evicted tenants as far as possible, and I think it is much better not to interfere with them.

Kerry Evicted Tenants.

MR. J. MURPHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what is the cause of the delay on the part of the Estates Commissioners in completing the reinstatement of Timothy Buckley on the lands of the Rockfield, Morrogh Bernard estate, county Kerry, to which reinstatement the landlord has already agreed; whether the Commissioners are aware if any grazing agreement has been made with any person for the lands preventing the reinstatement; and if so, to whom, and when the same will expire.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have been in communication with the vendor's solicitors as to the signing by the vendor of the purchase agreements necessary for the restoration of Daniel and Timothy Buckley. The agreements have just been lodged, and the Commissioners will now take the necessary steps to complete the transaction and have the Buckleys put into occupation. The Commissioners have no knowledge as to any grazing lettings of the lands in question.

Tanner Hill Evicted Tenants.

Mr. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain why James Brett, Tanner Hill, who is the only evicted tenant belonging to the estate of T. J. Walker, Esq., was not restored to his home when the estate was sold.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they are negotiating with the owner for the purchase of the estate in question, but an agreement has not yet been arrived at as to the price of the holding formerly occupied by James Brett.

Improvement Schemes in Ireland.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the case of rural district councils who have failed to complete the formalities in connection with improvement schemes under the Labourers Acts, representations for which were received by them in February, 1907, special steps will be taken by the Local Government Board to compel the prompt completion of these schemes; can he state the names of the district councils in each county in Munster by whom improvement schemes have been formulated but not completed; and will he consider the advisability of recommending, in cases of flagrant delay, that a time limit should be fixed within which schemes should be completed and submitted to the Local Government Board.

Mr. CHERRY: Improvement schemes under the Act of 1906 have already been received by the Local Government Board from 154 of the 213 rural districts in Ireland, and in the majority of the remaining 59 rural districts, schemes are in different stages of progress. This is a highly creditable record of the voluntary action of local authorities towards improving the housing conditions of the labouring classes in rural district, and indicates that there is no ground for any allegation that there has been a general default on their part in this respect. In some instances rural district councils had only obtained orders confirming schemes immediately before the passing of the new Act, and in consequence were not so eager to embark on new schemes, while in others, principally in Munster, the former Acts had been actively put into operation and a large number of cottages erected, so that the necessity for action under the new Act in these districts was not so urgent. For these and other reasons the fixing, as suggested, of a "time limit" to apply universally, would appear to be inadvisable, but the Local Government Board will carefully consider the circumstances of each case in which complaints are made of undue delay, and take such action as they think proper in pursuance of Section 9 of the new Act. Out of the 60 rural districts in Munster, schemes have been received from 40 since 1st February, 1907. I will communicate to the hon. Member the names of the remaining 20 districts.

Law as to Criminal Injury Claims.

Mr. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed at a recent meeting of the Wexford County Council requesting the Government to assimilate the law in Ireland, for what are known as criminal injury claims, to the law as it exists in England; and whether he proposes to take action in the matter.

Mr. CHERRY: A copy of the resolution referred to has been received. The Government do not contemplate legislation on the subject.

Arrests by Irish Police.

Mr. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether on Sunday night last at about ten o'clock, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, county councillor, and two other persons were arrested and brought to the police barracks in Tuam; whether they were detained without a warrant in the barracks all night, and until four o'clock the following evening; whether the police authorities twice refused the request of Mr. Glynn, solicitor, to have a local magistrate, three of whom were available, sent for to take the depositions in the case; whether it was only after the police had failed in their efforts to secure the attendance of resident magistrates from Ballinrobe and Loughrea that they consented to allow a local magistrate to act; and if so, can he state what is the explanation of this action on the part of the police, seeing that all that was required was to get a justice to give a remand to petty sessions.

MR. CHERRY: On the night in question, a crowd of about 200 persons with torches and drums surrounded the house of a man at Ballytrasna, near Tuam, with the obvious intention of intimidating him. A force of police from Tuam were proceeding to the place when they met a party of the men shouting and beating drums, of whom they arrested three, namely, Mr. O'Donnell and two other men, at about ten o'clock. These men were detained for the night in Tuam police station, and next morning the facts were reported by telegram to the constabulary headquarters. Instructions were wired to the police to take the persons arrested before a resident magistrate, but as it was then reported that no resident magistrate was available further instructions were issued at 2.50 p.m. directing that the men should be brought before a local justice, which was done at 3.30 p.m. The local magistrate admitted the men to bail to appear at petty sessions on this day. I have no information as to any request by Mr. Glynn, solicitor, but assuming that it was made, it was necessary that the local police should await instructions from headquarters.

MR. HAZLETON: What was the object of bringing these gentlemen before a local magistrate; was it because he would send them forward to petty session?

MR. CHERRY: The instruction was sent from headquarters to take them before a resident magistrate.

MR. HAZLETON: By what department was the instruction sent?

MR. CHERRY: The police.

MR. HAZLETON: Not by the Chief Secretary?

MR. CHERRY: No.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is it necessary to make such arrests in the night? Cannot the right hon. Gentleman instruct the police to do it in the daytime?

MR. CHERRY: When there is rioting or an attempt is being made on a man's life it is necessary to arrest on the spot.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that in future men charged with these offences are sent before sympathetic magistrates?

[No Answer was returned.]

Extra Police in Leitrim.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state what is the cost of extra police in county Leitrim for the two years ending 31st December, 1906, and 1907, respectively.

MR. CHERRY: The accounts of the cost of extra police are made up half-yearly to 30th September and 31st March. The amount claimed from county Leitrim in respect of the twelve months ending 30th September, 1906, was £34 14s. 9d., and the amount for the twelve months ending 30th September 1907 was £627 18s. 6d.

Education Fines in Ireland.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, during the passing of The Irish Education Act, 1892, through the House of Commons, an understanding was arrived at whereby the whole of the fines under the Act were to go in aid of local rates; whether this has been the practice for the past fifteen years; and can he say upon what grounds the Government now claim to appropriate two-thirds of those fines to the Crown.

MR. CHERRY: I have no information that any understanding was arrived at in this matter other than that embodied in the Act itself, namely, that any revenue from penalties under the

Act shall be applied in relief of local rates. The practice for many years was to pay over to local authorities the whole of the fines imposed under the Act. Doubts having been raised as to the correctness of the procedure, I thought it right to have proceedings instituted in the King's Bench Division in order to obtain an authoritative judicial interpretation of the Act upon this point. The King's Bench Division held that penalties under the Act were not payable in their entirety to the local authorities, but were to be applied in accordance with the provisions of the Fines Act (Ireland) 1851. That decision was affirmed last month by the Court of Appeal.

Board of Works Office, Dublin.

MR. DELANY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that in the Engineer's Department of the Board of Works, Dublin, there is a temporary clerical assistant who, at a salary of £300 per annum, was brought into the office a few years ago with the object of compiling the Board's rental, and that efforts are being made to have him placed on the permanent staff with pensionable rights; and, considering that the cost of works clerk in the same Department has only £200 per annum after a service of over twenty years, and that should the Treasury comply with the request to have the clerical assistant placed on the staff the cost of works clerk will be his subordinate, will he say what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. J. A. PEASE (for Mr. RUNCIMAN): No application on behalf of the officer referred to has been received by the Treasury.

Letter Delivery Regulation.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that, under a Post Office regulation made nearly a month ago, applying to the district of Drumcollogher, in the county of Limerick, when the postman failed to deliver letters or parcels owing to the house of addressees being closed, a charge of 3d. was made on each letter or parcel when called for at the post office; whether he is also aware that a number of persons had to pay this tax; and whether, having regard to the fact that this regulation was made under a misapprehension and has now been discontinued, he will take steps to see that the money paid will be refunded.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I wrote to the hon. Member on the 14th instant to inform him that instructions have been given for the amounts in question to be refunded.

Wexford Mails.

MR. FFRENCH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether inquiries are yet completed regarding the delivery of the Wexford mails at the varous villages on the Rosslare line of railway; and if he can yet promise a second delivery at Bridgetown.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The district referred to is wide and the inquiries necessarily occupy a considerable time. They are not yet completed, but I hope to be in a position to send the hon. Member a reply in the course of a week or two.

Irish Land Stock.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the annual amount of the Sinking Fund in respect of advances made for the purchase of land in Ireland under the Acts passed prior to 1903, and how this fund is invested; whether it is used for the purchase of Irish Land Stock; if not, whether he will order that in future it shall be so used, in order that the Irish Development Fund may be saved from an early exhaustion; and whether he can state when the practice began of investing the Sinking Fund under the Act of 1903 in this manner.

MR. ASQUITH: Advances under the Irish Land Acts prior to 1891 were made in cash from the Local Loans Fund, and the payments on account of Sinking Fund and interest are made to that fund. Under the Act of 1891 the advances were made in Guaranteed Land Stock, and the Sinking Fund repayments amounting to about £160,000 a year are invested in the purchase of this stock. In neither of those cases is there any liability on the Ireland Development Grant, which would not therefore receive any benefit from investing the Sinking Fund in the manner suggested. The Sinking Fund portion of the purchase annuities under the Act of 1903 has been applied since the commencement of the Act in making further advances.

Naval Policy.

MR. MYER: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will consider the desirability of not making any further reductions in naval expenditure, seeing that such reductions would necessitate the discharge of a great number of workmen, until the working classes of this country are more fully employed.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): No, Sir, my right hon. friend does not see how a naval programme which is based on considerations of security alone can be modified in the way that my hon. friend suggests.

MR. WEDGWOOD: May I ask whether the policy of building battleships to help the poor meets with the approval of the Government?

MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Member had better wait for the Naval Estimates.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he has received a memorial from a number of Members of Parliament urging the further reduction of naval expenditure beyond £8,000,000 which have been taken off the gross Navy Estimates since 1904–5; whether the memorial was signed by Members at the end of last session before the publication of the German Navy Bill; and whether he can state when it was presented to him.

MR. ASQUITH: My right hon. friend the Prime Minister informs me that he has received a memorial on the question of naval expenditure. He receives a very considerable number of memorials dealing with a large range of topics, and he cannot but think that it would be more convenient to the House if hon. Members desiring to obtain information on such matters were to put themselves in communication with the promoters rather than the recipients of these memorials.

MR. BELLAIRS: I avail myself of the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion and ask the promoters whether this memorial was presented after the details were published of the German Navy Bill, and that the signatures were collected long before.

[No reply was given.]

All-British Mail Route.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Committee appointed to investigate the question of establishing an all-British mail route, as proposed by the Colonial Conference, have reported; and, if so, whether he can state the nature of the Report and the conclusion arrived at by the Government.

MR. ASQUITH: The informal Committee have not yet completed their inquiries.

London and Paris Dress Exhibition.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the fact that the superior landlord of the grounds of the Earl's Court Exhibition has seized all the goods exhibited on the stalls of the London and Paris Dress Exhibition by way of distress for rent due to him, not by the owner of those goods, but by his own tenant of the exhibition grounds; and whether the Government will adopt or give facilities for the short and uncontroversial Bill introduced by the hon. Member for South Bucks to amend the law of distress, which would put an end to such action.

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir. At this period of the session the Government cannot undertake to provide facilities for private Members' Bills, however excellent their objects may be.

Female Franchise.

Mr. BYLES: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, having regard to the growing excitement in the country among women who are demanding the franchise, and to the unseemly street and police court scenes which result, he can see his way to make some statement to the House on the subject, such as would be calculated to allay the resentment and impatience that have become so menacing to the maintenance of public order.

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir; I understand that my right hon. friend has no expectation that any statement which he might make would be attended by the favourable results foreshadowed by my hon. friend.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked the views of the Government with regard to business for the remainder of the week.

Mr. ASQUITH said he proposed to take to-morrow the Second Reading of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill; on Wednesday, the Second Reading of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill; and on Thursday, Supplementary Estimates—Post Office, Royal Irish Constabulary, and Imperial College of Science. If time permitted Report of Supply would also be taken.

NEW BILLS.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE BILL.

"To provide for the better Representation of the People in Parliament," presented by Sir Henry Kimber; supported by Sir John Bethell, Mr. Simon, Earl of Ronaldshay, Mr. David Thomas, and Mr. Nield; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 88.]

LIGHTS ON VEHICLES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To render compulsory the carrying of Lights by Vehicles at night," presented by Mr. Watt; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 89.]

HOMEWORK REGULATION BILL.

"To provide for the better Regulation of Home Industries," presented by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald; supported by Mr. George Roberts, Mr. Ernest Lamb, Sir Gilbert Parker, Mr. Wedgwood, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Pirie, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Thomas Corbett, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson, and Mr. Fenwick; to be read a second time upon Friday, 5th June, and to be printed. [Bill 90.]

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

"To amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884," presented by Mr. Attorney-General; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 91.]

RAILWAY (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

"To provide for the establishment of a working-day of Eight Hours for certain grades employed in the manipulation of traffic," presented by Mr. Hudson; supported by Mr. Wardle, Mr. J. W. Taylor, Mr. Summerbell, Mr. Thorne, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. Shehan, and Mr. Curran; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 17th March, and to be printed. [Bill 92.]

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.

*Earl PERCY (Kensington, S.) in moving the following motion: "That this House, while welcoming the principle of an agreement with Russia in regard to Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, is of opinion that the terms of the Convention, while involving at several points a material sacrifice of British interests, still leave room for international misunderstandings of a kind which both the contracting Powers desire to avoid," said: I observe that in some quarters it seems to be thought that we have taken an unusual course in putting down a Motion on this subject at all, but if it is an unusual course, at all events, it is not dictated by any hostile sentiments, and the terms of the Motion make it unnecessary for me to explain that if we feel it our duty to criticise some of the provisions of this Convention, such criticism does not imply that we underrate the advantages, either to the cause of international peace or of the solidarity of Western diplomacy upon which Lord Cromer laid stress the other day, of an Agreement between ourselves and Russia; still less does it imply that there would be any reluctance on our part, should we again be entrusted with the conduct of foreign affairs, to carry out in the spirit as well as in the letter, the obligations into which the Government have entered. I think I may go further and say that if this Agreement were the means, as its promoters hope and as we all hope, of removing unfounded suspicions between the two Powers and promoting their friendly co-operation in the Middle East, that is a result which will go far to diminish the disappointment and dispel the anxiety which many of us cannot help feeling at the character and the extent of the concessions which we have been called upon to make. It may be asked what practical purpose is to be served by criticising the details of a Convention which are no longer susceptible of modification. The answer is very simple. It is that, in our opinion, the object which His Majesty's Government had in view is likely to be seriously prejudiced by the ambiguity surrounding some of the most important provisions, and we hope to be fortunate enough on this occasion to elicit from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, explanations of a fuller and more satisfactory character than we were able to obtain in the debate in another place. We are accustomed to congratulate ourselves that questions of foreign policy have ceased to be a subject of Party controversy, but that does not mean that different Governments have ceased to look at problems from different points of view, or that one Government may not and do not, take occasional steps which their predecessors would not have taken, and which they are at perfect liberty to criticise. I will remind hon. Gentlemen opposite that no one exercised that right of criticism more severely than did the late Sir William Harcourt when he led the opposition in the discussion on the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance. What it does mean is that when one Government has taken a new departure, its successors will not attempt, directly or indirectly, to go back on the course of policy to which the nation has been committed. The very fact that each Party in turn is committed to obligations in the contraction of which they were not consulted, not only gives them a right to point out dangers which in their opinion ought to have been foreseen and guarded against, and for the consequences of which, should they unfortunately occur, they, at all events, cannot be held responsible, but it places upon them the public duty of making, if they can, any suggestion which may be the means of preventing misunderstandings in future. That leads me to allude very briefly to the analogy which has been drawn in some quarters, and I think by the right hon. Gentleman himself, in a speech during the recess, at Berwick-on-Tweed, between this Convention and the Anglo-French Agreement concluded by the last Government. For my own part, I confess that I am unable to see any analogy between the two cases at all, excepting in so far as in both an understanding of some kind was arrived at. On the contrary, it seems to me that both the character of the settlement and the methods by which it has been arrived at in this case are the exact antithesis of those by which it was arrived at in the other. When it fell to my lot during the last Parliament to recommend the acceptance of the Anglo-French Agreement to this House, I ventured to say that I did not think you could judge of its value as a whole by merely examining the relative value of the concessions made on either side. On what grounds did I found that claim? That the essential characteristic of the Anglo-French Agreement was that it removed all outstanding differences between the two countries. It was a comprehensive attempt, and a successful attempt, to compose the rivalries which had hampered the freedom of action of both Powers in every part of the world, ranging from Newfoundland to West Africa, from West Africa to Egypt, from Egypt to Siam, and from Siam to the now historic New Hebrides. But that is not the case with the present Agreement. Of the difficulties which have arisen in the past between ourselves and the Russian Government in the Near East, Middle East, and Far East, those of the Middle East alone are included in its scope, and this very limitation which has made it impossible for the Government to exchange concessions in one part of the world, against concessions in another, has practically forced them to accept as the basis of their settlement the very arrangement which the authors of the Anglo-French Agreement devoted their utmost ingenuity to avoid. The authors of that Agreement started with the assumption that the most effective, if not only effective, means of preventing a future conflict and clash of interest between the two Powers was to put an end once and for all to anything in the nature of a con-dominion in identical or even contiguous geographical areas, and except in Siam and the New Hebrides where we practically recognised the existing state of things, that result was obtained. We got a free hand, so far as France was concerned, in Newfoundland and Egypt, and France obtained similarly a free hand so far as we were concerned in Morocco. But that principle finds no counterpart in this Convention. On the contrary, it produces an exactly opposite result. In Tibet it introduces and recognises what amounts to an equality of interests which has never been recognised, never in fact been even claimed, before. In Afghanistan it modifies an exclusive interest which we have hitherto always claimed for ourselves, and in Persia it attempts to guard against a future collision of interests, political and commercial, by a purely arbitrary delimitation of territory which I venture to say has no correspondence whatever with any natural boundaries, either political, geographical, or commercial. I do not for a moment pretend that these considerations are fatal to the present Convention, but they are fatal to any analogy between it and the Anglo-French Agreement. The two Agreements must be judged by totally different standards. In the case of the Anglo-French Agreement, the only question which could arise was whether the settlement obtained was worth the price paid for it, but in the present case the far graver question arises whether in fact we have obtained any real or permanent settlement at all. There are people who talk as if the removal of any cause of diplomatic friction between two nations is necessarily a guarantee for the future harmony of their relations. I think that is a superficial view. The whole history of our past relations with Russia goes to show on the contrary that it is perfectly possible to remove temporary causes of difficulty by concessions which so far from conducing to a permanent settlement have led to further and more acute controversies. An Agreement like the Anglo-French Agreement, which leaves each party free to pursue its own policy to a definite and foreseen end is, of course, a guarantee of future harmony, but that is not an advantage which can be claimed for an Agreement which merely facilitates the prosecution of rival policies without, in fact, taking the trouble to inquire whether these policies are reconcileable or not. As regards the part of the Convention which relates to Tibet, I have very little to say. My right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition in his opening speech on the Address described the policy of the late Government very concisely by saying that the less either we or Russia had to do with Tibet the better for both, and from that point of view I frankly admit I do not think this Convention introduces any change of policy at all. But if the late Government laid stress on their determination to avoid a policy of active intervention, they laid no less stress on their view that the interest which Great Britain had in all that concerned the external policy of Tibet was of a kind to which no other Power could lay claim. That was a point frequently insisted upon by Lord Lansdowne in conversation with the Russian Ambassador and admitted by the Russian Government itself in the oft-quoted phrase that "Tibet did not under any circumstances come within the purview of Russian policy." It is quite true that the preamble to this part of the Convention contains a platonic affirmation of the special interest which Great Britain has, owing to her geographical proximity, in the external relations of Tibet; but how is that principle carried out? In the Treaty which we ourselves signed with Tibet the Tibetans gave two pledges—first, to grant no concessions to any foreign Power without the previous assent of Great Britain; and, secondly, that whenever that assent

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was made and whenever those concessions were made to another Power, they should be balanced by corresponding concessions to ourselves. In other words we instituted an embargo on Tibetan action which we, and we alone, had the right to raise at our pleasure. But under this Convention Great Britain and Russia enter into a mutual understanding that neither of them will seek any concessions for themselves or their own subjects. I submit that that means the abandonment by ourselves of the only effective method of asserting the priority of our interest in Tibet; and it also places us in this somewhat awkward dilemma in the future, that either we must permanently insist—which hardly seems a practicable policy—upon the complete sterilisation of Tibet to all foreign enterprise, or else we must allow such enterprises to be carried out exclusively by Powers whose right to interest themselves in Tibet we have expressly denied. I dare say this change of policy is capable of justification, but the right hon. Gentleman will admit that it requires explanation. It seems to me that it throws away the only solid result of the recent Expedition and is calculated to produce an unfortunate impression on those frontier neighbours of India, the Bhutias and Nepalese, who have an intimate concern in all that relates to Tibet and from whose co-operation we derived so much assistance during the recent war. As to Afghanistan, Lord Fitzmaurice admitted frankly that the difficulties which have arisen between ourselves and the Russian Government practically narrowed themselves down to a single issue—namely, the limits within which direct relations between the Russian and Afghan local officials were to be recognised as permissible. Russia has never claimed the right to make direct representations at Cabul, and we have never denied the reasonableness and expediency of some arrangement for the settlement of local disputes without referring them on every occasion to Calcutta. The whole obstacle to arriving at an Agreement with Russia lay partly in the difficulty of finding a satisfactory definition of the questions which were to be regarded as purely local, in contradistinction to those which directly or indirectly involved political issues: and partly in the difficulty of devising satisfactory machinery by which these local negotiations might be conducted. So far as I can see, in regard to neither of those points does the present Convention carry us any further at all. It merely stereotypes the irregular state of things existing at present without affording the slightest clue for a settlement of any misunderstanding to which it may still give rise in the future. The Convention, however, contains one stipulation which I cannot help thinking may lead to embarrassments of a novel character. Hitherto we have always claimed for ourselves a position of complete freedom and independence in our dealings with Afghanistan. Now, I would like to know from His Majesty's Government, in what sense and to what degree they regard that claim as having being modified by the present Convention? There are two changes introduced by this Convention. The treaty obligations contracted between us and the Ameer become from henceforth obligations contracted between ourselves and the Russian Government; and, in the second place, the mode in which we exercise our influence with the Ameer becomes the subject of a separate undertaking with Russia, which seems to imply that she is to have the right to supervise and criticise the manner in which we conduct our relations with and fulfil our obligations to a country which she has repeatedly declared to lie outside her sphere of influence and with which she once more declares in this very Convention that she will have no political relations except through the medium of the British Government. I do not lay stress on the obviously illogical character of such an arrangement. I want to know what it means. We undertake in this Convention that we are only to use our influence in Afghanistan in a pacific manner, and neither to take ourselves nor encourage the Ameer to take any measures which threaten Russia. But Russia undertakes no corresponding obligations on her part. She is to be free to maintain or even to extend the railways built to the Afghan frontier—railways which may have been built primarily for the purposes of defence, but which everyone knows are equally capable of being used for purposes of offence. Is

Afghanistan to be debarred from taking similar measures herself? I do not in the least complain that the Government should have placed on record the pacific principles by which our relations with Afghanistan have been governed in the past and by which they will be governed in the future, but I wholly fail to see how the confidential relations which ought to subsist between allies are to continue between ourselves and the Ameer if on every occasion on which he may consult us as to the measures he should adopt for the security of his own dominions, a third party is to have the right to demand an explanation of any advice which we may think it our duty to tender to our ally. Then I come to the commercial provisions. It is surely a remarkable fact that this is the only place in the whole of the Convention in which the two Powers enter into any explicit engagement with regard to the maintenance of free trade. There is no such clause in the Agreement relating to Persia; even in the case of Afghanistan the arrangement is purely one-sided, for Russia gives no undertaking that when concessions are given to her they shall also be extended to Great Britain, nor does she enter into any engagement that she will permit free trade in Turkestan or in her own Central Asian territories. Did the Government during these negotiations make any attempt to obtain these facilities from the Russian Government? If so, on what ground were they refused, and why was it that this solicitude for free trade should have been confined to one country with which we have no commercial treaty at all, and over whose financial policy therefore we have neither the right nor the means of exercising any control? Again, we undertake in Article IV., whenever the development of trade calls for the appointment of commercial agents in Afghanistan, to consult with Russia on the subject. But in Article I. Russia undertakes that she will in no circumstances send any agents to Afghanistan. Does Article IV. when it comes into operation, release Russia from her engagement under Article I., or are we to understand that the word "agent" is used in a different sense? Throughout the East, whether an agent is called commercial or political, he would be regarded as the representative of the Government, and from the moment that we permit Russian agents in Afghanistan it is perfectly idle to assert that Afghanistan is any longer outside the sphere of Russian influence. Then I turn to the part of the Convention relating to Persia. Now British interests there may be considered from two points of view. From the commercial point of view all that we require is perfect equality of opportunity; from the strategic point of view we desire to prevent the occupation by any strong military Power of provinces which may form the base of hostile operations either against India or against Afghanistan. How far does this Agreement subserve either of those objects? The general nature of the arrangement contemplated is familiar to everybody, and can be described in a few words. From this time forward we are to regard Persia as divided into two portions by a triangular line drawn from Zulfikar on the Russo-Afghan frontier and passing through Yezd and Ispahan to Kasr-i-Shirin on the Turkish border. The whole of the territory north of that line, including both the ancient and modern capitals of Persia, the termini of all the great trade routes, and some of the most fertile and populous provinces, is henceforth reserved exclusively, so far as we are concerned, to the development of Russian industry and Russian influence. South of the line only a comparatively narrow area, consisting mainly of desert, at the south-eastern extremity of Persia within a line going from the Afghan frontier, near Ghazik, through Kerman to Bunder Abbas, is to be regarded as correspondingly reserved for British enterprise, while the whole of the rest of the southern area is, I will not say thrown open, but to be kept open to the unrestricted commercial rivalry of the world in general. I understood from the statement made by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the House of Lords that the Convention is not to be interpreted as introducing any change in regard to free trade, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, as applied to the interchange of commodities, and that British rights in that respect depend, not upon this Convention, but upon our Commercial Treaty with Persia. Those who remember how, not many years ago, our Commercial Treaty with Persia was modified to our detriment under Russian influence, may be excused a passing feeling of regret that this golden opportunity was not taken to come to some understanding both with Russia and Persia for an alteration of the Persian tariff in a direction more favourable to British interests. At all events, I understand that neither party will be allowed, in connection with concessions they obtain in their respective spheres, to secure preferential advantages in the shape of differential tolls and taxes, and any attempt to secure those advantages will be regarded as a breach of the Convention. But the Government will hardly deny that free trade, in the sense of equal opportunities for commercial and industrial enterprise, is completely destroyed by this Convention, Throughout the greater part of Persia the development of the natural resources of the country, of mining enterprise, of the construction of roads and railways, instead of being open to free and equal competition, will become, or may become in future, the monopoly of a single Power, which will be able, if it chooses, without any breach of its Treaty engagements and without imposing any differential tolls or taxes, effectively to divert the course of trade into the channels most favourable to its own interests. How serious such a prospect is from the standpoint of British trade will be realised by any one who takes the trouble to study the position of the trade routes in Persia. Under this Agreement every trade route in which Russian trade is interested, including that from Trebizond to Tabriz, which carries British trade to the value of a quarter of a million a year, has been carefully kept in the Russian sphere of influence. In the case of two of the three British trade routes from the south which run from Bushire through Shiraz, and from Mohammerah, through Ahwaz, over the Bakhtiari mountains to Ispahan, we are deprived once and for ever of all chance of improving our facilities of access to our immediate objective by the fact that Ispahan is included in the Russian sphere. It is no answer to say, as Lord Fitzmaurice did the other day, that in any case some further objective like Teheran must have been included in the Russian sphere. The more explicitly and liberally we recognised the right of Russia to complete control over the whole of the trade of Northern Persia the more careful we ought to have been to safeguard British interests in Southern Persia. The third British route, running from Bagdad through Khanikin to Teheran which carries British trade to the amount of nearly a million a year, and is the most important of all, has been placed from start to finish in the Russian sphere and under the absolute control of our chief commercial competitors, who have not only no interest in developing that line of communication themselves, but cannot do so without doing the very thing they desire to avoid—namely, facilitating the competition of British enterprise with their own trade in the north. The net result from a commercial point of view, is that while the monopoly given to Russia in the north is of great value, both actually and potentially, and while she is given power seriously to cripple our trade in the neutral area, the monopoly reserved to us in the south is of very little value either actually or potentially, while in the neutral area we lose that priority of right which we have hitherto successfully asserted in view of our long established interests in that region before any competitor appeared on the scene. We are told that Article III. carefully safeguards existing British concessions in the neutral area. But those concessions depended for their value on the assumed priority of right which they gave us as pioneers of commerce to be also the agents for carrying out any improved means of communication which might in future supersede them and render them practically valueless. Again the British Government has obtained explicit promises that whenever concessions of a certain kind are given to other Powers in Northern Persia, corresponding concessions will be given to Great Britain in the south. Are we to understand that this phrase about safeguarding existing British concessions in the neutral sphere covers not only British concessions which are actually working, but also those hypothetical rights which have not yet materialised? Why have the British Government adopted this line of demarcation which from a commercial point of view seriously compromises and jeopardises British interests? That it recognises "existing facts" from a commercial standpoint will be asserted by no one who compares the relative amount of British and Russian trade in any of the great markets of the south, while from a geographical standpoint it is hard to explain why the line which follows the great desert as far as Yezd is there deflected instead of following the same natural "divide" as far as Kashan. Then we are told by Lord Fitzmaurice that if we had not assented to this line we might have facilitated arrangements between Russia and Germany for the introduction of the Bagdad Railway to this part of the world. Personally I have never held the view that it is to the interest of this country to offer permanent obstruction to the construction of the Bagdad Railway, provided that we can obtain reasonable conditions in regard to the construction and control of the southern end of it. But supposing it is true that it is our interest permanently to obstruct the construction of the Bagdad Railway, this Agreement makes it possible for Russia and Germany to come to an arrangement for the prolongation of the railway through the neutral area to a point on the Persian Gulf without our having anything to say in the matter. These are not the real reasons for this line of demarcation. The real reason for the course which has been taken was revealed by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs when he stated that if we had refused to accept this line of demarcation we had been given clearly to understand by the Russian Government that we should have no agreement at all. I have just read the life of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff in which he recalls an interview which he had with Prince Dolgorouki in 1888 in which the Prince said that the real obstacle to an agreement between Russia and England in Persia was that wherever British trade flourished, Russian trade failed. In view of that I cannot help thinking it is somewhat ominous that the only sphere Russia is willing to recognise as exexclusively British is a sphere in which at present Great Britain has no commercial interests whatever. It is obvious that His Majesty's Government originally had in their minds a line of demarcation much more favourable to British commercial interests—a line which would have been open to none of the criticisms which I have urged this afternoon; and that rather than lose the prospect of an agreement altogether they have deliberately abandoned it—I do not say that I blame them—with all its advantages to British commerce in order to secure the advantage of strategic isolation. But have we secured that advantage? I believe that there are authorities who hold that the strategical question is negligible, that Russia would never undertake an invasion of India from that quarter. That view may be perfectly correct, but the presence of a foreign army or a foreign occupation in territories closely adjoining Afghanistan and Baluchistan would constitute a cause of unrest serious in India and anxiety to the Indian Government. Whether the advantage is worth paying this particular price for is another matter. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs has alluded in debate to a report of a secret committee, comprising representatives of the Foreign Office and of India, which considered this question during the period of office of the last Government, and quoted from it in order to show that both the last Government and the Indian Government were willing to assent to precisely the same demarcation of British interests in Persia which is embodied in this Convention. The quotation of that confidential document seems to me a most unusual step and a most unfortunate precedent. But in any case, even if the late Government had contemplated the possibility of giving financial assistance to the Persian Government in return for a pledge that no foreign enterprise would be allowed in those provinces which bordered on Afghanistan and Baluchistan, that would be no argument for accepting the same arrangement as a sufficient *quid pro quo* for abandoning every other interest we have in Persia. The important point is not whether this advantage was worth securing, but whether we have in fact secured it? The answer depends mainly on the use which is to be made of the spheres of influence which the Convention establishes. I notice that the phrase "spheres of influence" has been carefully avoided. Is there in fact anything to prevent their creation? Article I. speaks not merely of "commercial," but of "political" concessions. What meaning is to be attached to "political"? If one or both of the contracting parties were to persuade the Persian Government to give them a lease of the territories in which the Convention recognises that they have a predominant interest in the maintenance of law and order, to entrust them with the machinery of administration, and to allow them to maintain a local garrison, would that be contrary to the provisions of this treaty? If so, it is a pity it was not stated on the face of it. If not, I fail to see how we are to prevent these leased territories—these spheres of influence—from becoming occupied provinces with frontiers practically conterminous, thus depriving us of that advantage of strategic isolation for the sake of which we have surrendered so much. So fatal do I think the policy of leased territories would be if applied to Persia, that, unless it is clearly understood between us and Russia that any attempt to initiate such a policy would be contrary to our pledge to respect the independence and integrity of Persia, it would be far better to have no Agreement at all. In the case of China, diplomacy has not held that there is any inconsistency between the policy of leased territories and the independence and integrity of that country. Fatal as the policy of leased territories has been in China, it would be doubly fatal in the case of Persia. In China the leased territories are comparatively small, limited to the seaboard, widely separated from one another, and they do not interfere with effective control of the Empire by the central Government. In Persia the spheres would extend into the heart of the country, cut across existing units of local and provincial administration; and any attempt to introduce into them methods of administration different from those in force in the neutral area would lead to such anarchy and chaos as would, sooner or later, necessitate foreign intervention The right hon. Gentleman, in his speech at Berwick-on-Tweed, said the Agreement meant that we were not going in for the forward policy in Persia. I know no sane person who has contemplated such a policy in the sense of the assumption of administrative and territorial responsibilities in Persia. What I am afraid of in connection with the Government's policy is that, unless there has been a clear understanding as to the character and the limits of the influence which the two Powers are at liberty to exercise in their respective spheres, we shall one day find ourselves in the position of having either to resign the exiguous rights we retain in Persia under this Convention or to take the serious step of occupying territory in order to assert those rights effectively. I think I have now touched on all the main points which are left in obscurity by the terms of this Convention. There is only one other but it is a very important one. It is that for any recognition of the paramount position of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf we have to look, not to any clause in the Convention, but to a statement by the Foreign Secretary in a despatch to our Ambassador that satisfactory assurances have been received from the Russian Government that they "do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf." I accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement that those assurances are satisfactory, but, if they are satisfactory, I am surprised that they should have been described by him in language which seems to imply rather a grudging admission of a doubtful claim than a frank recognition of an undoubted right. I do not press the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the non-inclusion of any statement with regard to our rights in the Persian Gulf in the Agreement itself, because I think the explanations on that head are perfectly satisfactory, but I do ask why we have not these "assurances" in black and white under the signature of the Russian Government. And we are the more entitled to put that Question because it is gentlemen opposite and not we who have insisted on the superior value of written engagements to verbal assurances. Only one word more. A common argument in favour of this Agreement is that all alternative policies had been tried and failed. We are reminded that the results of the Drummond-Wolff policy of regenerating Persia by means of British capital has been disappointing. But it is that policy which has given Persia her banking facilities, her roads and telegraphs, has opened to commerce her one navigable highway, and in the south at all events has relieved her of the necessity of borrowing the funds she requires on conditions which impede her economic development. I cannot admit that that policy has been a failure. I agree that its results have been disappointing, but why? Not because the rivalry of the two Powers at Teheran prevented her from developing the resources of the country, but because instead of trying to rehabilitate her finances by administrative reform she has chosen to have recourse to loans given on terms which forbade the development of communications and the construction of railways. We are not told whether that prohibition has been withdrawn, but so long as Persia declines to reform her administration it is idle to imagine that the mere signature of a Convention like that now under consideration will do away with the main causes of her stagnation. It has been my duty to make many criticisms of the Convention, not with a view to depreciating it, but in order to enable the right hon. Gentleman to make such explanations as will enable future administration to know what the Government had in view when they framed it. I am not blind to the great advantages which would be obtained from an Agreement which results in hearty and cordial co-operation between ourselves and the Russian Empire. It will facilitate the solution of many other questions in Europe as well as in the East which statesmen on both sides have been afraid to touch in the past for fear of awakening mutual jealousies and suspicions; and in Persia it might be the means at all events of relieving commerce, f o anxiety as to the political future of the country. But those results will not be obtained so long as there is any doubt as to the manner in which the two Powers interpret the main provisions of this Convention. It is possible, and I hope it is the case, that the right hon. Gentleman has received, in regard to all the points I have mentioned, assurances from the Russian Government as satisfactory as those which he says he has received from them in regard to British interests in the Persian Gulf. If so, we shall be able to congratulate him on having achieved something much more than a solution of some temporary and passing diplomatic difficulties, and not the least of the advantages of this Agreement will be that those Mahomedan races, whose confidence in British good faith and honour is one of the greatest assets of the British Empire, may in future come to look upon it not as a sign that Great Britain has ceased to take any practical interest in their welfare, but, on the contrary, as a crowning proof of the unselfish and disinterested character of her friendship. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, while welcoming the principle of an Agreement with Russia in regard to Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, is of opinion that the terms of the Convention, while involving at several points a material sacrifice of British interests, still leave room for international misunderstandings of a kind which both the contracting Powers desire to avoid."—(*Earl Percy.*)

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I have nothing to complain of in the tone of the speech of the noble Lord, who has put his points to the House with that clearness and command of language of which he has a special gift, and there was nothing in the tone, at any rate, of the speech of which one can complain that it was inspired by any partisan feeling or political animus against the Agreement. But when I come to the substance of the speech, it seems to me I detect already two clear and quite distinct views in the minds of the Opposition in regard to this Agreement. The noble Lord, not for the first time in this House, has spoken in a way which seems to separate his view of foreign policy from the view which is held by Lord Lansdowne, and I should say on this occasion that, while Lord Lansdowne, in making criticisms on our Agreement, spoke on the whole in a tone of optimism, the noble Lord, while also making criticisms, spoke in a tone of pessimism. I was quite content with the attitude, which, I suppose, I may call the authoritative attitude of the Opposition, taken up by Lord Lansdowne, because it seems to me that, though he had criticisms to make on the Agreement, though there were things in it which he himself would have wished otherwise, yet he was hopeful that the Agreement would produce large results, so good that the criticisms which might be made upon its details would not in the long run weigh against the good results on the whole. He spoke as one who had good expectations from the Agreement; the noble Lord has spoken rather in the tone of one who wished it had never been made. Well now, let me examine the history of the Agreement and the nature of it, for, after all, my best answer to the noble Lord will be to trace what passed through the mind of the Government in making the Agreement, what their object was, and why they came to make it. The noble Lord complained that the Agreement is not what he says the Anglo-French Agreement was—a comprehensive one; that it does not settle all outstanding questions between the two countries. He says it is ambiguous. There is no agreement which cannot be said to be ambiguous. Even the Anglo-French Agreement still leaves some points under discussion connected with the wording of it on some questions. You cannot avoid some ambiguities, and whether they are important or not depends entirely on the spirit in which the Agreement is worked by the countries which are parties to it. I have never for a moment asked any one to suppose that the proof of whether this Agreement is a good one or not does not remain to be tested by the spirit in which it is worked. Any agreement, however clearly expressed, cannot avoid the charge of ambiguity any more than a Bill drawn by the best draftsman presented to this House has ever averted a charge of ambiguity being brought against it by the Opposition. If it is examined from the point of view of one who wishes to find fault you can find ambiguities in anything. But when the noble Lord says the Agreement is not comprehensive, like the Anglo-French Agreement, I wonder what sort of agreement he would have made with the Russian Government? Would he have made none unless it was a comprehensive one; and if a comprehensive one, how much would it comprehend? Would he have brought European questions into the Agreement? Would he have endeavoured to get all hypothetical and prospective questions which might arise between us and Russia into the Agreement? If he had attempted to do that I venture to say that at the present moment he would have had no Agreement at all. This Agreement, I admit, does not cover by any means every subject of interest between England and Russia; but some agreement of some sort was made necessary by the nature of the case. The conditions in Persia when we came into office made some agreement—or some policy—necessary, or we had the certainty of friction. The noble Lord says the removal of causes of friction is not a guarantee of peace. That, as a general proposition, may be true, but it is equally true that the non-removal of causes of friction is a certain source of quarrel. When the Party opposite handed over the control of affairs His Majesty's present Ministers found a situation in Persia which called for some policy and some decision on their part. A situation had been growing which had been the subject of frequent consideration any time during the last ten years by the Government of the day and the advisers of the Government of the day. There were two possible policies. One was, putting aside the idea of any Agreement at all, to say we would determine to protect our own interests, and decide that if there were Russian encroachments in the north of Persia they would be met by corresponding measures to protect British interests in the south. That undoubtedly must have led us at once to a forward policy. The noble Lord did not advocate a forward policy. He repudiated a forward policy.

*EARL PERCY: It is inconsistent with our pledges to maintain the independence of Persia.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Yes, Sir; but supposing that events in Persia were such as to invite interference, or supposing that the pressure of political influence was such—and the noble Lord himself admitted it might go far without actually infringing integrity—supposing in these circumstances Russian political influence had been gaining steadily in the north of Persia and the integrity of Persia was becoming more and more precarious, and we had no Agreement, what would our policy have been? Considering present events in Persia I am certain that before now, without some Agreement such as we have, both countries would have been interfering in Persian affairs. The state of affairs has been such that one country or the other would certainly have interfered to prevent the situation being exploited by the other one, and if one interefered then both would have interfered. At any time during the last ten years, if it had been our object to prevent Persia falling under Russian influence, we would have adopted a forward policy to strengthen our own interests in the south. And the opportunity two years ago at any rate was exceedingly favourable. Persia was very weak. Russia was not prepared for a forward policy. There was a favourable opportunity if ever there was one for our not bothering ourselves about any Agreement, but for taking whatever measures we thought necessary by lending money, by obtaining concessions in return for loans, in order to strengthen our hands in the south of Persia. Now the objection to any policy of that kind is that whatever you gain and whatever you take, you have always to push your influence further still to protect what you have recently taken, and while you think all the time that you are making yourself safer, you are increasing the burden of your expenditure. And there is the larger consideration that the policy of no Agreement must, under the present precarious state of things in Persia, have led to friction between Russia and ourselves which would have extended over all the political relations of the two countries. Approaching the matter from that point of view, the Government came to the conclusion not only that the policy of agreement was desirable, but that it was absolutely necessary—if Russia was willing—that that policy should be entered upon without delay. Then if we were to have an Agreement, what would the Agreement be? It is said we have not consulted experts in making the Agreement. Experts have been at work for years past—experts at home and in India—considering what the British position in Persia was and on what lines an Agreement might or should be reached. I am all for making the best use of experts and getting the fullest knowledge from them, but the difficulty is that experts differ, and that experts, who are necessary people to have on the spot, take a somewhat concentrated view, which is a very large and intense view of the interests on the spot, but which is not easily reconcilable with the larger interests elsewhere. There is a tendency, also, for experts to take a more and more intense view of what British interests in those regions are and must be. The noble Lord said that our Agreement had not followed the natural boundaries. Now the question of an Agreement following natural geographical boundaries and those of British influence has been considered before, and years ago it was laid down that if we were to have a British sphere of influence and commerce corresponding to the actual facts of the case which might fairly be claimed to be an exclusive British sphere it would have been one running, roughly, through Khanikin, Kermanshaw, Hamadan, Ispahan, Yezd, Kerman to Seistan. That had been discussed as a possible line of partition on each side on which an Agreement something of the nature of the one now before the House might have been made. It was said that commercially the line would be more favourable than the one which the Government has adopted. I admit it, but from other points of view it was open to very grave objections which were pointed out at the time. Roughly, there were three main objections which were present to the mind of every one. One objection was that it would have placed Teheran, the capital, in the Russian sphere. That is an objection to any arrangement at all. Another objection was that such a line of partition would open a route into Mesopotamia through

Persia or Russia, and the third objection was that by taking any such line it would have been difficult to include Seistan in the British sphere, or, at any rate, if included, Russia would have been left within striking distance of Seistan. That last objection was absolutely fatal to any such line of partition. If there had been an Agreement solely for the commercial object, then some such line as that might have been taken, but there would have been no answer to those who pointed out that Seistan lay open to the Russian advance. We should have been rightly accused of having for commercial prospects, which are not nearly so great as the noble Lord alleged, sacrificed what ought to be the main and the first point of any Agreement between us and Russia. Anyone who has studied the question of Agreement between Great Britain and Russia would see that the first point all through in the minds of those who considered it has not been the commercial but the strategical importance of it. It is the strategical position which makes the Agreement desirable and essential; and when you study the strategical position you will find that the key to the whole of it is Seistan. You may go through documents by experts, and you will find again and again that Seistan is the main point of importance, the main point of danger to Indian interests. If Russia were to advance her railways and her influence so as to come into Seistan you would have opened a new land door of advance into India, a new route which was not open now. That point of Seistan has been, in the discussions of Indian frontier questions for some years past, the chief point of anxiety, apprehension, and preoccupation on the part of those who have studied the subject. I might have secured the support of those who have commercial interests in the west of Persia by making a different Agreement; but in securing that support I would have been open to the charge that I had not secured the strategical point of Seistan, which, if not secured, might have at any moment imposed an increased charge on the Indian revenue for extra defence, and which might subsequently become a real danger. The noble Lord desires to know the object of His Majesty's Government in concluding the Agreement. It started from this point of view. In making the Agreement in respect of these regions of Asia strategical considerations with us were paramount. I do not wish to be an alarmist as to the danger of the invasion of India. An invasion of India could never be an easy undertaking. My own personal belief would be, for what it is worth, that if an invasion were to be tried, whoever tried it would spend treasure and life in vain against the gigantic natural rampart which forms the Indian frontier. But that is not everyone's opinion. Even if you hold that opinion, however, the Indian Government, if Russian railways and Russian power advanced nearer and nearer to the more vulnerable points of the Indian frontier, must have suffered from anxiety and apprehension, and must have made larger demands for increased forces in order to prepare for contingencies. You would have had demands made from India which you would have been unable to resist, and which would have led to a large annual increase of expenditure for the purposes of defence. Another line, better commercially, but different from the one we have chosen, would not have served the purpose of securing Seistan and of securing the strategical interests of India. We took as our starting point in the Agreement a line based on strategical considerations, a line which now exists on the map which has been considered before, and upon which expert opinion has placed the highest value as a guarantee for the security of India. It is the line which we have in this Agreement. It is quite true, as the noble Lord said, that the late Government never discussed this particular line as the basis of Agreement with Russia. It was considered on its merits from the strategical point of view, but considered only in connection with the loan to Persia, the object being that Persia should give a guarantee that she would not give any concession to any other Power but ourselves. Persia is very weak. The Persian power to keep her undertakings depends on the support she receives from the person to whom she has given them. In the nature of the case, this must be so. Here we adopted this line from the strategical point of view, and we went, not to the Persian Government, but to the Russian Government; and we have in the Agreement got there an undertaking that they will not seek for any of those concessions or influences which go with these concessions to bring the Russian power into Seistan. It has been the point of apprehension in the minds of experts for many years that Russia might push her concessions, first by telegraphs, and then by railways, down through Seistan, and down that side of Persia, and finally to the sea. This would be a far greater danger than the reaching of the Persian Gulf. In this Agreement the British sphere of influence goes to the mouth of the Persian Gulf. We have a position of advantage at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, but without this Agreement it would not have been the Persian Gulf that would have been the main source of apprehension; it would have been the south coast of Persia. I am not going too far in saying that the main source and cause of apprehension and preoccupation on the part of those who have desired to secure the defence of India has been the danger of Russia pushing into Seistan, and finally reaching the south coast of Persia. Against that, as far as we can guard against anything by an Agreement, we may be regarded as secured by this arrangement. The noble Lord says that there is a gap in the Afghan frontier on the north. Yes, there is a gap on the north. It arises as the result of what happened in the course of the negotiations. It was not very important to us that we should push our line into the corner of Afghanistan and the Russian frontier; but it was important to us that the Russian sphere should not come down along the Afghan frontier. It was on the whole considered convenient between the two spheres that there should be a gap rather than that the two spheres should be actually conterminous. But that is not a gap of strategical importance. It is true that if railways were made on that side it would form a line of advance into Herat. But it is not a position which British troops need occupy to defend. The occupation of Herat would be the beginning of war, but whether that occupation is made by one door or by two doors is a matter which cannot influence the result, and is a matter of no importance. Herat can be approached from the Kush at the present time; and that being so Herat occupies a very different position from Seistan, which is, and, I trust, will always be safe from any foreign approach at all. I say that every one who has studied the strategical problem of the advance to the Indian frontier must regard the Agreement we have made with the greatest possible satisfaction and relief. The noble Lord says that we have paid too dear for the strategical advantages we have gained, that our commercial sacrifices are too great.

*EARL PERCY said he asked for an explanation of the spheres of influence. The Convention mentioned the "political" concessions which the Powers might obtain in their respective areas. He wanted to know what was the meaning of "political," and whether it would not be possible to convert these spheres into "leased" territories.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It is a hypothetical question which it is impossible to deal with in advance. If the noble Lord means that it might be possible for Russia to acquire anything in the nature of territory in Seistan, I think it would be absolutely impossible. As to the use which will be made of political or commercial influence by each country in their own spheres, and what uses are consistent with the integrity of Persia, of course, that is a question which can be interpreted from time to time as cases arise; but it never entered my head for a moment that an Agreement which confirmed the integrity of Persia can be turned into a partition without consultation between the Governments concerned. But the more the noble Lord puts hypothetical cases as to how influence in one sphere may, by lease of territories or anything of that kind, be converted into an advantage to the country which has that sphere, the more do I point to the fact that Russia is shut off from anything of that kind in regard to Seistan, owing to the strategical advantage gained, and the more do I emphasise what the strategical danger would have been if the Agreement had not been obtained. As to the commercial sacrifices, the Khanikin trade route has been especially singled out as one which we have allowed to be in the Russian sphere. That is the one which would give Russia access to Mesopotamia if she desired. Well, that is not specially a British trade route; it is simply a trade route along which British trade goes in common with the trade of other countries. It is, no doubt, an outlet from Persia into Mesopotamia. Russian trade is considerable in Persia, greater than ours. Anybody who looks at the map will see that if Russia was to have any sphere of interest in the north at all, the greater part of the Khanikan trade route must have gone into the Russian sphere. I would not deprecate Russia having an opportunity of acquiring trade connection with Mesopotamia. It is possible that in the future the Baghdad Railway will be made, and will develop Mesopotamia and Mesopotamian trade; if so, it will only be reasonable that Russia shall not be shut off from access of communication with that territory, if the trade is to develop, as some people think it may. I, for one, am convinced that, if the Baghdad Railway is to be made, and Mesopotamia to be developed, if it is not to be a source of friction, it will be absolutely necessary that countries who commercially are interested and must be interested in that territory should have commercial advantages, and opportunities of communication which will enable them to share in the profits of what will be a great highway of commerce. But, in any case, if Russia was to have no part of the Persian Gulf in her sphere, if she was to have under this Agreement no arrangement with us by which she was to be entitled to acquire a commercial outlet on the Persian Gulf, and if, when looking further north, you found a trade outlet through Persia by land going into Mesopotamia, and said that there must not be any Russian sphere there either, you would have been driving so hard a bargain that you would not have been able to have any bargain at all. Of course, it goes without saying in this Agreement, the whole understanding of which is equal advantages as far as trade is concerned, that there should not be differential advantages on the trade routes between the trade of different countries, whoever has the concessions. But when I am told that we have thrown away under this Agreement a hundred years of the efforts of diplomacy and trade, I must say I think that a very loose and unfair statement. A hundred years of the efforts of diplomacy and trade!

*EARL PERCY: I did not say so.

SIR EDWARD GREY: No, but Lord Curzon said it. What have we done in those hundred years? For a great part of those hundred years we were without a competitor in Persia, either commercial or political. We could have done from the south what we pleased. We got concessions for the Imperial Bank of Persia; we had a concession for the navigation of the Karun; we had a concession for the Ahwaz to Teheran road, and another for roads from Ahwaz, which I think has not been practicable, because of the nature of the population which possesses the route. All those we have got, but if that is the result of the last hundred years of the efforts of diplomacy and trade in Persia, what was the result of the next hundred years likely to be without this Agreement? I will ask the House to bear in mind what the change has been in Persia during the last twenty years. There were twenty years ago no Russian Consuls and no Russian trade in Southern Persia; there was no Russian Bank. Now, in the last twenty years, the Trans-Caspian Railway has been developed, three Russian roads have been made to Teheran and Meshed; Russian trade goes to the south and competes; Russian subsidised steamers run to the Persian Gulf; Russia has Consuls-General at Ispahan and Bushire, Consuls at Bandar-Abbas, Kherman, Hamadan, and Seistan, and she has pushed the telegraph into Seistan, And behind all that there is the military shadow of the Russian forces. Anybody who looks at the map and sees how Russian and Persian territory lies, who takes into account not only what Russia has got in Persia in the way of concessions, and political influence acquired at Teheran, but also the great military forces which she can at any time bring to bear on the Northern Persian frontier, must see how the shadow of Russian influence has been in the last twenty years thrown over the whole of the north of Persia. And more than that, in the last twenty years Russian loans have been made to the Persian Government, secured on the Customs receipts of the whole of Persia, except the Gulf ports; and the Persian Government have come to an Agreement to seek no other loan except from the Russian Government, to grant no other railway concessions for a term of years; and the Persian Customs had come under a foreign control which was not favourable to ourselves. When I consider how the position has changed in the last twenty years, and when I am told that by this Agreement we have thrown away great prospects and great commercial advantages, I say you must take into account the situation with which we had to deal and the starting point from which the Agreement had to be made. I cannot believe that anybody who realises what the situation as regards Persia was when we began to discuss this Agreement can believe that under it we have really sacrificed great commercial prospects which there was any chance of our realising in future years. If you were going to strengthen your influence in Persia, if you were going to say that in the north of Persia you were going to compete for concessions for roads and railways, or whatever you wanted, with Russia, then you must have embarked on a forward policy at once, and used your strength to further it. But the position in Northern Persia has been the result of the British policy of the last twenty years. I am quite willing that this Party should bear its share, but in the last twenty years it has not, at any rate, been a large one. Nor do I instance this in order to bring any charge against other Governments who have deliberately not adopted a forward policy in Persia in past years. I think they were right not to do so. And though I am bound, after the attacks which have been made upon our Agreement, to point out the consequences of the gradual growth of Russian influence in the north of Persia, I do not say that I make any reproach against other Governments for not adopting a forward policy. But I do say this—when you consider what the commercial prospects in Persia were and what the actual situation was with which we had to deal, if you say that by this Agreement we have thrown away a hundred years of the efforts of diplomacy and trade, it is sheer rhetoric. It will be much nearer the truth to say that under this Agreement we have given up nothing that was not gone before. The noble Lord spoke of the damage done to British trade by the fact that the end of a trade route such as the Ispahan is in the Russian sphere. The Russian sphere is not a wall through which nothing is to be passed. Trade that goes by that route will enter Ispahan as before, and Ispahan is not the real terminus; that route goes to Teheran, which must in any circumstances be in the Russian sphere. The noble Lord asked as to reserving existing concessions in the sphere.

*EARL PERCY: In the neutral area. One of the Articles of the Convention is that all existing British concessions in the neutral area are maintained. I think that applies to the Russian sphere as well as the neutral area, but the promises we have got from Persia with regard to future concessions relate to the neutral area.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The hypothetical promises.

*EARL PERCY: Yes.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I must refer to those. I should like to look at what actually are the Persian engagements before I say how those affect the area. As to the Persian Gulf, what we have from the Russian Government is in writing, and it is quoted, the material part of it textually, in the despatch written to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The noble Lord, I think, admitted that there might be valid reasons for not dealing with the Persian Gulf in an Agreement of this kind. I would rather have the matter left somewhat vague, as it is, and the assurance that Russia does not deny that we have special interests in the Persian Gulf, than I would have any narrow undertaking with regard to fortified posts on the Gulf. Lord Lansdowne used very strong language some time ago to the effect that we should resist with our whole force any fortified posts in the Persian Gulf. That language is very strong, but it is also narrow language, and limited to one particular contingency. I do not myself think of the danger of any Power—especially in view of our own position at the mouth of the Gulf, strengthened as it is by this Agreement—of any Power spending treasure and labour on establishing a fortified place inside the Gulf. If you consider the climate and the position, it seems to me it is out of the question that a fortified place should be established there against a strong naval Power like ourselves holding the mouth of the Gulf. We have great commercial interests in the Persian Gulf, but in recent years, and more particularly looking to the future and the possibility of the Bagdad Railway being constructed, the other side of the Persian Gulf—which is not Persian—seems to me to be more and more important than the Persian side. Nothing we could have put into this Agreement as to the Persian Gulf could possibly have dealt with anything on the Western shore, and year by year it seems to me more and more probable that the developments in Mesopotamia will be far more important before long than on the other side of the Persian Gulf. We are better off with our own Declaration that we have special interests in the Persian Gulf, although I admit, after what I have said, that it must be a matter of grave consideration to this Government what steps should be taken from time to time in view of future developments to safeguard those great commercial interests in the Persian Gulf. Now I come to the subject of Afghanistan, and I welcome the fact that Lord Lansdowne the other day in discussing this Agreement, laid stress upon the three satisfactory assurances which the Russian Government had given. These Russian pledges are embodied for the first time in a binding undertaking between the two Governments, and, as Lord Lansdowne pointed out, they are now given in a form more thorough and satisfactory than anything we had before. Now the noble Lord opposite asked, "Why, considering the fact that Afghanistan is entirely within our sphere of influence, say anything to Russia which gives her any right to have any voice at all in our relations with the Ameer?" The Article to which the noble Lord referred was Article II., under which we declare that we have no intention of interfering in the internal government of Afghanistan, and we engage neither to annex nor occupy any portion of Afghan territory, provided the Ameer fulfils the engagements he has already contracted and entered into with His Majesty's Government. The point which I think answers one or two of the noble Lord's Questions is this: In all the discussions that have ever taken place between England and Russia with regard to Afghanistan, they have proceeded upon the assumption, admitted by us as well as by Russia, that Afghanistan is to be in the nature of a "buffer State" between the two Russian and British territories. When we came to discuss this Agreement we found that that was the starting point which we must take in regard to Afghanistan—an admission made by our predecessors. Then it appeared very clearly to us that if Afghanistan is to be a "buffer State," it is not unreasonable that the Russian Government in coming to any arrangement to regard Afghanistan as being outside their sphere of influence and promising not to send any agent into that country, would naturally expect from us some assurance that we would not, for the purpose of threatening their frontier, change the character of the *status* of Afghanistan; that we would not annex or take over Afghanistan in such a way that its very war-like population should be organised, and armed by us, and if need be, used by us as an aggressive force against Russia. Russia, naturally, does not fear Afghanistan as a "buffer State," but the matter would be very different if we attempted to adopt a forward policy and annexed Afghanistan. We should then have on the Russian frontier a most formidable force at our disposal which we could exercise with great effect. What the Russian Government desired was to safeguard itself, so far as the Agreement could do it against any such intention on our part. We willingly gave a pledge that we had no desire to pursue a forward policy toward Afghanistan. We had no desire to go into it, to annex it, to organise, train, and arm the Afghan Army in order to use it for the purpose of offence against Russia. And, therefore, we willingly gave that undertaking. But at the same time it was absolutely necessary that the Indian Government should not be trammelled in its own relations with the Ameer, and it was expressly guarded that if we were not to interfere with Afghanistan the Ameer must keep the engagements into which he has entered with us. That ought to be a great advantage to the Ameer, because, subject to his keeping his Agreement with us, he has now a binding document that he is not to be interfered with by either of his great neighbours, and we provide him with proof and assurances that we have come to an agreement with Russia which ought to release him from the apprehension which would be natural to any one in his position that someday or other he would be in the invidious position of a small State between two great neighbours who had quarrelled. But with that assumption which underlies this Agreement, that Afghanistan is to remain a "buffer State," it, of course, goes that you cannot put Afghanistan, as regards trade, on the same footing with Russia as with ourselves. The noble Lord asked why did we not get from Russia a corresponding undertaking that she on her side was not going to interfere with our authority in Afghanistan? Russia has given an undertaking that she will not interfere with Afghanistan, that Afghanistan is outside her sphere of influence, and that all her political relations with Afghanistan are to be carried on through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government. Of course, if she were to take threatening measures towards the Afghan Frontier, that would no doubt be a violation of this Agreement. But the noble Lord says: "Why not get from Russia some promise that she would not push her railways and means of communication further towards Afghanistan?" We did consider making some proposal of that sort; but you must remember that the Russian railway communications have already been made, and that any reciprocal undertaking that neither of us would push on railway communications towards our respective frontiers must, therefore, naturally have been more disadvantageous to ourselves than to Russia.

*Earl PERCY: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that the pledge that we will only exercise our influence in Afghanistan in a pacific manner does not preclude the Ameer from taking measures similar to those which Russia has taken? I did not complain that Russia should build railways, but what I said was that I did not understand whether the British Government was to be debarred from giving to the Ameer any advice they thought conducive to his interests.

Sir EDWARD GREY: Subject to this Agreement, as long as the Ameer keeps his Agreement with us there is nothing which restricts his action within his own territory. If he were to take aggressive measures towards Russia, Russia would be bound to come to us, and we should be bound to use our influence with the Ameer not to take aggressive measures. But there is nothing in this Agreement to restrict his powers to develop his own railways. Now I come to Tibet. In regard to Tibet the noble Lord said that we had admitted in this Agreement an equality of interests in Tibet. He spoke not only of an equality of interests, but of disinterestedness. He quoted a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition who the other day said that the less either of us had to do with Tibet the better. He said that was a negative statement of policy; but as a matter of fact the final policy of the Party opposite in regard to Tibet has been a negative policy; and we have carried out in this Agreement their intention. We have no desire to annex Tibetan territory, nor to have any political representatives there provided other Powers are under the same disability. That was the policy of the late Government and we have put it into this Agreement. Article IX. about concessions was regarded by the late Government as a self-denying ordinance which was to affect ourselves as well as others. If that is so, this Agreement with Russia in no way weakens our position with regard to Tibet. From the moment of the Tibetan expedition our relations with Tibet have been exceedingly complicated. An Agreement was made with the Tibetans themselves and then subsequently an Agreement was made with China, which in one or two points modified that Agreement, but otherwise maintained it. And therefore, we have now made an Agreement with Russia which is not in conflict with Article I of the governing Treaty with China. Therefore I would say this: that our Agreement with Russia—you may construe it if you like as limiting the construction of the Agreement with Tibet—does not in any way invalidate the actual provisions of the Agreement with China which was made before. If it were really true, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite said, that the less we have to do with Tibet the better, then all I can say is that we have given up nothing which is of any importance. Although Tibet is near to India and far from Russia it has to be borne in mind that the Russian interest in Tibet is a real one. Russia has many Buddhist subjects in Lhassa, and if we had pushed a forward policy in Tibet and had occupied a predominant political influence over the internal affairs of Tibet, we should have been in a position to make trouble with Russian subjects at a distance through our holding the centre. Therefore it was a matter of importance to Russia that we should give some undertaking of this kind, and as to give that undertaking was entirely in accord with the policy laid down by the late Government I do not see why objection is taken to it. There is one more point which has not been raised in this debate, but about which I have been much criticised elsewhere, and about which from time to time I have received many resolutions, and most of them very uncomplimentary ones. I have been told that at a time when Russia was passing through a constitutional crisis, at a time when events were happening internally in Russia which did not meet with the approval of those who addressed me on the subject, that that was not a time to enter into diplomatic negotiations or to make an Agreement with Russia. I should like to say generally that when you are dealing with a great homogeneous nation, foreign interference—an attempt by your foreign policy to exercise pressure on the internal constitutional problem—does nothing but inflame and irritate. It is of no benefit, no help; and sooner or later, generally sooner, it produces a united national resentment against you. If I had adopted any line of that sort; if I had said that this was not a suitable moment to come to an agreement with Russia, observe what would have happened in Persia itself. I have already said that it would have led to interference in Persia. I cannot say that all danger of interference in Persia is now over. With the internal troubles that exist, and with the troubles on the Turkish frontier, no one can say with certainty what will happen. But the danger of interference by ourselves or Russia is greatly diminished; and when I hear it said that Persian interests have suffered, I maintain that that statement is the direct contrary of the truth. I have used the term "British and Russian spheres." I trust that it will be noted and understood that I have used it solely in the sense in which it is used in this Agreement and not in the sense of the political partition of Persia. Under the Agreement we bind ourselves not to seek certain concessions of a certain kind in certain spheres. But these are only British and Russian spheres in a sense which is in no way derogatory to the independence and sovereignty of Persia. But if Persia is to have, as I hope she will, the chance of working out her own constitutional problems, now so serious and difficult, in her own way; if, after years of misgovernment and bad government, she is to come by constitutional means to a better form of government, to a better, stronger, and less corrupt administration, then I say that the chance of doing so without interference, her chance of working out those problems in her own way, has been greatly improved by the Agreement between Russia and ourselves. And if we had come to no agreement what would have been the effect upon Anglo-Russian relations elsewhere? Certainly, at the present time the effect in Persia would have been renewed friction, leading, perhaps, in years hence, to conflict between the two Powers. Anyone who looks back over the last twenty years can recall more than one occasion when the relations between England and Russia were critical; and during the last two or three years those relations have been much improved, to the sensible relief and advantage of both countries. But without some agreement of this kind I do not believe that you could have maintained the equilibrium of relations under the present conditions in Persia. The relations must have got better or worse. Under this Agreement there is every prospect that they will get better. Without it they must have got worse. There comes a turning point in the relations between nations; and if you pass one of these points by it may be long before another presents itself. You cannot command opportunities, and if you neglect or reject one, you may not have it again. I believe that in the last two or three years, after a condition of more or less friction and difficulty, there did arise an opportunity of improving the relations between the two countries, and of turning them into a different channel altogether. If, years hence, there had been continued friction in Persia, with the resulting friction on other questions where the interests of Russia and England directly or indirectly touched; and if, years hence, it had led to conflict—I say that, if then anyone in my place today had made the admission that while in office he had seen an opportunity of turning the thoughts and dispositions of the two countries from distrust and suspicion into friendly channels, and had deliberately refused to take advantage of that opportunity; then, whatever excuse he had given at the time, he would in the long run deserve the severest condemnation. In another place, Lord Lansdowne expressed his belief and confidence that this Agreement, once made, would be faithfully kept. Charges of bad faith have been frequent between ourselves and Russia. We, of course, can always answer those charges against ourselves; but they are made against us as well as by us. I do not believe that they can be substantiated, because our policy has never been false. But I think that sometimes our changes of mood are wanting in policy, and they lead others to think that the blame must be traced to our conduct of foreign affairs. In past years Russia has found in critical moments, wherever she turned, that ours was the deciding influence against her. That, no doubt, produced, not only an absence of good will, but an active belief in the contrary disposition between the two Powers. What, I trust, will happen from this Agreement is that a change is made possible in this direction. I admit that confidence is a plant of slow growth. I do not wish to force it. I could not if I wished, because the degree of friendliness depends, not on the Governments, but on public opinion in both countries. But I do not myself believe that, when once between England and Russia a belief in goodwill is established on both sides, it will be repaid by bad faith on either side. If that be gained, the benefits in the long run—the relief which will come from anxiety and the permanent contribution to peace—will be such that any criticism made upon the Agreement to-day will be regarded as mere dust in the balance. Again, that establishment of goodwill will in time remove, not only the causes of friction which are dealt with in this Agreement, but other possible causes of friction which might arise elsewhere. Against this, what have we sacrificed? In Afghanistan, I believe, nothing. In Tibet nothing, unless in either country you were in favour of a forward policy, which we undoubtedly were not. If we had been in favour of a forward policy, of course, we have sacrificed a great deal. But if not, we have sacrificed nothing which we wished to gain. In Persia we have sacrificed some possibilities of trading—advantages which, judging by the use made in the past of these opportunities, and judging by the trend of events in the last twenty years were, in my opinion, exceedingly remote. We have put into danger nothing that was not already at hazard; and the vulnerable part of the Indian frontier by way of approach through Persia—that danger is made as remote as any Agreement can make it. Russia has gained commercial advantages; but I ask anyone who criticises this Agreement to study impartially the situation in Persia in the last twenty years, and then to say whether Russia has gained anything which there was any reasonable prospect of our getting for ourselves. We might have opposed her in Northern Persia. We might have obstructed her. But I do not believe that in the long run we could have prevented the concessions made under this Agreement; and I am quite convinced that the last twenty years show that those things from which we have shut ourselves off under this Agreement are not those which in any reasonable prospect British policy could have attained. Lord Lansdowne initiated this policy, it is not too much to say, for it is not so long ago that the policy of splendid isolation was enunciated from that Bench. It is the policy of making other nations whose interests touch ours feel that our friendship was

Sir Edward Grey.

possible and worth having. We have done our best since we were in office to make other nations with whom Lord Lansdowne had established relations of friendship feel that our friendship was not only worth having but that it could be depended on. I can say with a good conscience that, if our predecessors succeeded us to-morrow, they would find the friendly relations that they established with other Powers, not only not impaired, but strengthened by having stood the test of time and by our handling of them. We have continued that policy and strengthened the belief in our good faith; and it is because we have succeeded in doing that with other Powers that the Russian Government has thought it worth while to enter into this Agreement with us. The Agreement has been entered into in that spirit; and the spirit which has made this Agreement possible will, I hope, trust, and believe, make this Agreement a success and a mutual advantage to both England and Russia in external affairs; and I believe at this moment that whoever took our place would find that by this Agreement the position of this country has been strengthened and that by it we have confirmed all that was best in what our predecessors handed over to us, and have materially, and I hope permanently, improved the prospects of peace.

*THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey) said he had no objection whatever in principle to the Governments of Great Britain and Russia defining in a diplomatic Agreement their spheres of influence in these three countries which were dealt with, provided, of course, that the Agreement was a fair one and of a character likely to be satisfactory to both parties. But what were they to say of the particular Agreement which was under discussion that afternoon? He was bound to look at it as a business arrangement between the two countries, defining their interests in three areas in Asia. He would say a few words first upon the Persian side of the question, because that came first in the three chapters of the Agreement. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman declared that experts had been at work for many years considering the question of the extent of the interests of the two countries in Persia. It would be interesting, he thought, to know who were the experts who were responsible for drawing up the preamble and Article I. of the particular portion of the Agreement which referred to Persia. They were told that in certain provinces of Persia adjoining or in the neighbourhood of the Russian frontier on the one hand, and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the other, the two countries had certain spheres of influence, were desirous of avoiding all cause of conflict, and had agreed to terms under which the line which limited the Russian sphere of influence was drawn from Kasr-i-Shirin and passed through Ispahan, Yezd, Kahk, and ended at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers. It would be very interesting to know who were the experts who were prepared to state that Ksar-i-Shirin and Yezd were adjoining or in the neighbourhood of the Russian frontier. It appeared that if they were not to suppose, and he could not suppose, that the words of the preamble "adjoining or in the neighbourhood of Russian territory," had been inserted there for the purpose of misleading public opinion, the only alternative was that the collective intelligence of His Majesty's Government was altogether devoid of a knowledge of the geographical features of a country which, with almost reckless levity and disregard to the consequences, they had set themselves to partition. But he passed from the anomalies of the first paragraph to the actual concessions granted by one Power to the other. They found on the west, that the trade route from the Turkish frontier running to Ksar-i-Shirin and thence through Kermanshah and Hamadan to Teheran, which had been largely built up by the enterprise of British merchants, and which carried British trade to the extent of about £750,000 a year, was handed over gratuitously to Russia, our chief commercial rivals in that part of Asia. He had travelled over every mile of that route, and having according to the custom of the country to progress slowly on foot and with baggage mules he had opportunities of studying which nation had commercial and political predominance in that country. From the commercial point of view it was undoubtedly a great sacrifice which had been made by this country, and if they looked at the concession made from the political point of view it was equally serious. His Majesty's Government seemed to be rather proud of having "scotched" the ambition of one Power by bringing another Power into the field of operations. It was quite clear from the words of the right hon. Gentleman that he attached great importance to putting this territory into the hands of Russia on account of the position which another Power, Germany, had attained in this neighbourhood by the building of the Baghdad railway; but if the Government thought by this somewhat Machiavellian policy of "scotching" the ambition of Germany by introducing Russia they were going to benefit Great Britain they were grievously mistaken.

SIR EDWARD GREY, who was indistinctly heard, was understood to declare that he had never stated that it was the object of this Agreement to interfere with the Baghdad railway or to prejudice German interests. His whole point was that if the Baghdad railway was to be made and Mesopotamia developed it must affect that part of Persia and the Russian means of communication and trade could not be shut out.

*THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY said he certainly appeared to have misconstrued the words of the right hon. Gentleman, but the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs speaking in another place had said that if the Government had interfered so as to prevent the railway falling into Russian hands, then he thought they would have in all probability gone out of their way to bring another Power into the field against us. He could only put the construction upon those words which he apparently erroneously put upon the words of the Secretary of State. But that was only one concession which we had made at the dictation of Russia. We had also admitted that we no longer were prepared to uphold our position of ascendancy in the provinces of Southern Persia, which only a few years ago a representative of the late Government declared in terms which could not be mistaken, we could not abandon for any cause whatever. We had also placed the southern capital of Persia, Ispahan, under Russia. It was entirely British in its sympathies, and the trade of Great Britain was at least ten times that of Russia, and yet we had placed it in the hands of the northern Power. But it was even more astonishing to find that the Government had admitted the right of Russia to claim the town of Yezd as being within her sphere of influence. He need hardly remind hon. Members that Yezd was the centre of a very important community, the fire worshippers of Persia, who had great sympathy with the great community of Parsees, who formed so large a portion of the population of one part of our own Indian dominions. What had we obtained in return for the sacrifices made in the south and west? We had as our sphere of influence a triangle of territory of about half the size of the Russian sphere and in which, before this Agreement was concluded, the interest of Russia was practically negligeable in quantity. The position of Russia in regard to Seistan in South-Eastern Persia was made a great point of by the Government in defence of their Agreement. He might perhaps be able to throw some light upon that question because he had had the advantage of residing at Seistan himself, when for the first time Russia sought to create particular interests for herself in that particular part of Persia. She inaugurated the movement by the dispatch of a consul to Seistan. That gentleman lived in splendid isolation in a mud hut, in the capital of Seistan, and his regular duties must have been exceedingly light, for he had no Russian trade to foster or encourage and no Russian subjects whose interests he was called upon to protect. Hard upon the heels of this official representing the Russian Government came an individual who he supposed must be described as an unofficial representative in the shape of a vagrant naturalist, who was supposed to be searching for birds, butterflies, and other animalculæ in

Persia, but whose real work, he knew beyond dispute, to be the distribution of rifles to the Baluchi chiefs on the borders of Baluchistan. The position of Russia was this, they were able to annoy Great Britain by stirring up discontent among the tribes and to raise the plague bogey, which they did at the time of his visit, and so harass trade with Persia across the frontier. He found nothing in the Agreement in any degree calculated to put an end to this sort of irregular proceedings if Russia should feel called upon at any time to resume it. He found no arrangement to prevent the arrival of consuls and vagrant naturalists in future. The great claim the Government made for their Agreement in this part of Persia was that they had secured immunity from a menace in regard to the construction of a railway which he thought, if they had studied the physical features of the country, a little more accurately, they would have realised was in point of fact no menace whatever. Having toiled, as he had done, wearily over the gaunt succession of forbidding mountain ranges, which ran parallel with one another and transversely across the whole of this part of Persia, knowing as he did the profound dislike which Russian engineers entertained for anything in the semblance of a mountain ridge, he could fully appreciate the supreme satisfaction which the diplomatists of Russia must have experienced when they recognised that they had actually succeeded in persuading the authorities of this country that they did harbour some intention of choosing this, the line of greatest resistance, to construct a railway across Persia. It was open, of course, to anyone to tell him that though he might know these places as a traveller he had not that expert engineering knowledge which was necessary to give an opinion of value on this question. He was prepared, therefore, to quote the words of one whose knowledge of the physical geography of the borderland of the Indian Empire would be undisputed—Sir Thomas Holdich—whose name was so honourably associated with the demarcation of so many frontiers of these States on the Indian borderland. Speaking of this particular line of country, he declared that a line from the north through Khorasan to Bunder Abbas—

> "possesses all the disadvantages from an engineering point of view that any line directed across a rough, mountainous country, taking each range in succession at right angles, can possess. The cost would be enormous. The 750 miles of direct measurement from Bunder Abbas *via* Kerman, Turbat-i-Haideri and Meshed to the Trans-Caspian line, would probably expand to 1,000, and that 1,000 would cost five or six times the amount expended over any 1,000 miles of Russian railway elsewhere in Asia. About three-quarters of it would not only be a mountain line, it would be a mountain line working at the greatest possible disadvantage with but little base for gaining gradient on the hill-sides, and little room to turn round in the intermediate valleys."

It was the menace of this practically impossible railway which His Majesty's Government had succeeded in securing them against. He would like to contrast the attitude of the Russian Government when dealing with a true and natural line of railway development in Persia, namely, the line along the mountain valleys and along the plateaux from Teheran *via* Kermanshah to Baghdad. They took up an attitude of *non possumus* and said that unless we were prepared to grant them that line, in which they had no interest whatsoever, as far as the southern part of the line was concerned, either political or commercial, we were to have no Agreement at all. It was impossible, of course, to refuse to make some mention of the question of the Persian Gulf. They had been given various reasons by His Majesty's Government for the non-inclusion of the *status* of Russia and ourselves in the Persian Gulf within the actual limits of the Convention itself. They had been told that other Powers besides Persia were concerned in the Persian Gulf, but he understood that this Convention was merely an Agreement between ourselves and Russia defining our respective interests in that part of Asia. He did not understand that the Government considered it necessary when partitioning Persia to consult the Persian Government as to whether our spheres of interest should be included in the Agreement, and he could not see why, therefore, it was necessary to consult Persia or Turkey in defining our own specific interests in the waters of the Persian Gulf. To sum up the effect of the Agreement with regard to Persia, we had given up the trade route to which he had referred, we had abandoned our position in the southern provinces of Persia, which position a short time ago we had declared in the most emphatic terms we were not prepared to give up, and we had retained in consequence only the naval control in the Persian Gulf, if indeed we had retained that for the future, and naval control, as so able a strategist as Captain Mahan had said, was an imperfect instrument unless it was reinforced and supported by the shores upon which it acted. We had given up a large number of the chief cities in Persia in which the interests of this country were infinitely greater than any interest that Russia had ever had or ever claimed to have in them, and in return for all this we had received as our sphere a triangle of desert and sparsely populated country half the size of the Russian sphere, and, except possibly for strategic reasons, of very little value. It could only be claimed that we had gained anything by the inclusion of the triangle in our sphere of influence on the ground that we had secured immunity from attack upon that side of the Indian Empire, and he failed to see how we had secured any immunity which we did not possess before. Seistan, if war was ever to come, was as much at the mercy of Russia to-day as before the treaty was concluded, and that the position of Seistan would ever become a greater menace to us than it was at present was sufficiently doubtful in view of the physical features of the country. A great point was made by the Government that for the first time in a definite treaty we had the assurance of Russia that Afghanistan was outside her sphere of influence. They must take it from that, that the Government did not attach very great value to the explicit assurances of Russia unless they were contained in the form of a definite treaty. If that was so, he asked them why it was that they were content to accept merely an explicit assurance with regard to the Persian Gulf, whereas they had made such concessions in order to get within the limits of a treaty the assurances which Russia had repeatedly made, eleven or twelve times since she first made them in 1872, that Afghanistan was outside the sphere of her influence. There was another point which was an extremely important one with regard to Afghanistan. He understood that we were practically pledged to take no steps to make preparations to defend Afghanistan in the possible event of any future attack upon that country. At the same time, as had been pointed out, Russia was permitted to continue to make any conceivable preparation which she might consider advisable, not only for defence, but for offence, along the whole length of the frontier of Afghanistan. The Government did not seem to realise that when war came paper Agreements must inevitably go to the wall, and that the whole object of a treaty of this kind should consequently be either to prohibit the Power with whom they were negotiating from making preparations for war on the frontier in time of peace, or, if that was impossible, at any rate to secure for themselves the privilege of preparing defences. It did not seem to have been sufficiently recognised that we were pledged by the most solemn engagements to defend Afghanistan from any attack from without. There were, of course, many minor points open to criticism in the Convention. It seemed to him to be a rather one-sided Agreement when we gave Russia freedom of trade in Afghanistan, but apparently asked for no similar advantages in Turkestan, Bokhara, and Trans-Caspia, which were the possessions of Russia lying along the Afghanistan frontier. There also appeared to be a great deal of doubt with regard to agents, as in one part of the Agreement they were told that Russia pledged herself not to send them into Afghanistan and in another part that if commercial expansion should justify it in the future, the question of sending agents there would be duly considered. The Government had failed to realise that in the Russian service there was no difference between commercial and political agents. If Russia was to be permitted in the future to send commercial agents into Afghanistan, that country would inevitably cease to remain outside the sphere of her influence. In Tibet we, with a long coterminous land frontier, with trade relations extending back over a long period of years between India and that country, with treaties and agreements, with the expedition which had cost no small sum of money and no few lives carried out to enforce those conditions, had placed ourselves upon a mere equality with Russia, the nearest point of whose frontier was not within hundreds of miles of the northern part of the country. There was only one word which could adequately describe the diplomacy which boasted of such an achievement—the word "grotesque." He could not conceive on what ground the Government had admitted that Russia should possess a position of equality with us in that country. If her claim to equality was admitted on the grounds that a large number of her subjects looked to Lhassa as the central point of adoration of their religion, a very large question was opened and a very dangerous precedent set. Were they to understand that in the future, supposing some question in another part of Asia arose, Russia, because she had a vast number of Mahomedan subjects was to be able to claim equality of interest with us in the great centres of Mahomedan religion? Were they to understand that this was to be a precedent for Russia claiming equality of interest in Mecca or other provinces in which Great Britain had interests of paramount importance? This question presented many very serious difficulties for the future. The Chumbi Valley had been singled out as a specific case in which there was definite equality of interest between this country and Russia. He did not need to remind the House that prior to 1890 a violation of the Indian Frontier Treaty by the Tibetans necessitated the Convention of 1890, and that was followed by the Trade Regulations made in 1893. One of the provisions of that Agreement granted free trade between the two countries for a term at any rate of five years. The Tibetan officials did not attach the same meaning to free trade which he presumed was attached by the members of the Government, because they found one of those officials in contravention of the Agreement levying a 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty on all British and Indian goods which passed through his district. The result of this and of the violation of our frontier by the Tibetans was the despatch of a mission to Lhassa under Colonel Younghusband, the outcome of which they all knew. The point he wished to make was that when next our Agreements with Tibet were travested or our frontier violated by the Tibetans, were we to consult with Russia before we took any steps to secure the carrying out of our legal rights? That appeared to him to be a position of intolerable humiliation. In the case of the Chumbi Valley, for instance, if the evacuation was not carried out for any particular reason, was it to be the subject of discussion between the two Governments? He wished to know if a similar case arose in the future were we still to be bound to ask the Russian Government's advice in dealing with these questions affecting the frontier? If that were so, all that the critic could ask was what in Heaven's name had Russia got to do with the Chumbi Valley or the Indian Frontier? He wished to mention one more absurdity before he resumed his seat. We had bound ourselves by a solemn pledge to the Government of a third Power never to send a representative to Lhassa. It appeared to him to be an unreasonable thing to bind this country to any third Power never to send a representative to the capital of a country which was coterminous with our own for many hundreds of miles. That Agreement could only have been made on the assumption that China always had been, was now, and always would be able to control the action of the Tibetans. The whole teaching of history told them that that was not the case, and that the future would falsify the teaching of the past, he did not believe, judging from certain happenings on the frontier of China and Tibet which came to his knowledge when travelling through those countries not long ago. If it was found at some future time that China was unable to answer for the Tibetans over whom she held a shadowy suzerainty, what was to be our position now that this country had bound itself not to deal with the Government of Tibet? He would like to say a word upon two aspects of the Agreement looked at as a whole. He thought His Majesty's Government had not been very successful, either in this House or in another place, in defending the particular Articles of their Convention dealing with those particular countries in regard to which the Agreement was drawn up. They had been repeatedly asked not to look too microscopically at the details of the Agreement, but to consider the value of the Agreement as a whole. If the Agreement was able to bring about that amelioration between the relations of Russia and this country which His Majesty's Government appeared to think it would, he would be inclined to say that even these rash concessions which they had made would not prove in the long run to have been too great. But there were two other aspects to be considered when they looked at the results regarded as a whole which had not been touched upon and had received very little attention. What was going to be the result of this Agreement upon individual enterprise in every corner of the world? He thought it would be admitted that the British Empire in the past had been built up very largely if not almost exclusively by individual action and individual enterprise. Our position in Persia had been built up very largely by the enterprise of Anglo-Indians and British merchants, and when they saw the result of much patient labour and toil, upon which many valuable lives had been spent, dashed to the ground with a single stroke of the quill of an uncomprehending Government, the result would be that of a douche of cold water thrown upon British enterprise not only in those particular districts but in other corners of Asia and the world in general. What was going to be the result of this treaty upon the prestige of Great Britain in Eastern countries and more especially in India itself? Only those who had lived amongst Eastern people could realise what prestige meant to them. It was impossible for anybody who had not been in Eastern countries to realise what the effect would be of what was looked upon as a retreat by Great Britain before Russia upon those people who dwelt upon the borders of the North-West frontier of India. Hon. Members who had had personal experience in India and others who had heard of the extraordinary rapidity with which news of this kind travelled in Eastern countries, independently of the material assistance of telegraphs, the post or railways, who knew how stories of this kind rang round the bazaars of an Eastern city; anybody who knew the North-West frontier of India well knew that the one absorbing topic of conversation in its bazaars for many years had been the respective power of Russia and Great Britain in that part of Asia. He had laid stress upon that point because it seemed to him that at the present time the peoples of the East were beginning to treat with rather less respect than in the past the prestige of the white man, and knowing that we must continue in the future as we had done in the past to govern India almost exclusively by prestige, he had no hesitation in saying that the result of what would be looked upon as a retreat and the securing of more power by Russia would have a very undesirable effect upon the unruly tribes we were called upon to govern on those frontiers. In criticising this treaty he had taken the view that it was a business arrangement drawn up between two Powers, and holding the views he did after ten years study of these frontier questions, he was bound to criticise somewhat severely particular items in the Agreement. In conclusion, he sincerely hoped that the aspirations which His Majesty's Government held with regard to promoting a better state of feeling, of which this might be the forerunner between the two great countries might see fulfilment in spite of the forebodings which he and others who had studied the question on the spot could not help but feel when they criticised particular details of the Agreement under discussion.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said the noble Lord who opened the debate was careful to avoid anything so strong as the statement made by the last speaker that British traders had been ruined. It might be so, but he could not say that he was aware of it. He had no doubt that his hon. friend with vast interests in Persia (Mr. Lynch) who would take part in the debate would amplify the statement if it were true. He could find nothing in the Agreement to ruin any enterprise which existed at the present time or which was likely to exist. On the strategic branch of the subject the noble Lord declared that he knew the tribes on the frontier and was convinced that our prestige among the wild tribes would be destroyed by the drawing nearer of Russia under this Agreement. Whatever might be said about the Agreement in other respects, and he himself had great doubt as to the wisdom of the Afghan portion of it, it did not bring Russia nearer. The Afghan part contained some things in regard to which he wished his right hon. friend the Secretary for India to make some explanation when he came to reply. The defence of the Agreement was that it was to be taken as a whole. The defence of it by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was a strategic defence. The right hon. Gentleman said that we had obtained a great strategic advantage in the Seistan district. It would be cruel of those who were called upon to take part in the debate to think it necessary to go over the whole of the ground covered by the Agreement, and to state what they approved and disapproved. He proposed, therefore, to accept what had been said in another place some days ago, and what had been said that day by the noble Lord the Member for Kensington and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Foreign Affairs as having put the arguments on both sides before them, and on the whole it appeared to him that a stronger case was made for the Convention than against it, in regard to both its political and its strategic aspects. But he thought that the Afghan portion was full of traps, and it did not appear to have received the same consideration which had been paid to the other parts of the case. As he read that portion, it appeared to depend wholly on the free assent of the Ameer. There was no undertaking on our part that we would use our influence with the Ameer to secure his assent to the Convention. He regarded the whole of that part as wholly beside the mark, inasmuch as we gave nothing by it. The vulnerable point from the strategic point of view in the defence of India was always shifting, and although that made them view the varying policies with misgiving and doubt, it did not necessarily prove that the advocates of the shifting policies were wrong from time to time. Railways might affect the question of strategic weakness at particular points. It was worth remembering the opinions of the great men of the past in regard to frontier policy. Lord Lawrence, who, in regard to one main point was as fierce a jingo as his opponents, said he would make any sacrifice and do anything to keep Russia out of Afghanistan. Herat was in those days the key of India. Three years ago they discussed this subject, and the Leader of the Opposition made an interesting speech which was afterwards reprinted. All interest had then turned to the Turkestan side. If hon. Members would refer to that debate they would find that the strategic advisers had concentrated their vision on Turkestan. The whole argument in regard to the making of railways and the whole case made against the then Prime Minister turned on the importance of the Russian communications on the north, and on the Oxus. It was quite clear that almost all the speakers went on the assumption that that was the vulnerable portion of the frontier. They now turned to Seistan as the weak and vulnerable part. But the Government could not say that their advisers were united upon Seistan being the vulnerable point. Sir Sydenham Clarke, in the new edition of his work on Fortification, had gone most elaborately into this question. According to the Secretary of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, there had been a great waste of money in fortifying even Quetta, guarding as it did both the Seistan and the Herat—Kandahar lines of attack. They must, therefore, look with some suspicion on the repeated alarms which they heard. As to the difficulty of Russia reaching India, he need not say anything on the present occasion. A foreign writer, who had written the greatest books on Russia, had pointed out with extraordinary vigour the reasons which made so difficult as to be almost impossible a Russian military attack on India. But with regard to Afghanistan, the Agreement was a very wide one to make. It stated in Article V that the present arrangements would only come into force when His Majesty's Government notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Ameer. It was not very well drawn, but he assumed that the words "present arrangements" covered the Afghan part and nothing outside it, and, assuming that to be so, would it be an unfriendly abstention on our part if we failed to secure that consent? The Ameer of Afghanistan stood in a very difficult position. It was not his own opinion that counted altogether. It was public opinion and the opinion of the officials around him, and from the writings of the late Ameer they knew how terrible was the task which was his almost every day, when he had a clear opinion, of making that opinion prevail with the fanatical influences that surrounded him. He did not know whether it was contemplated that his consent should be freely given and whether the Ameer would not receive some of the stipulations with doubt. He freely admitted that the Government were right to conclude a Convention, and that they were right to pay a price, not for strategical considerations, but for the great political advantages this arrangement gave them. The main body of the Persian part and the Tibetan part he left entirely to their judgment. It was the Afghan part alone he wished to consider. It had already been stated by the noble Lord that Article III suggested that there should be designated certain agents and authorities in the frontier provinces to establish direct relations. It was admitted by both parties that these local arrangements were desirable. There had been difficulties in the past with regard to this matter, and if they could be established by common assent it would be better than the present state of things. Still, it was very dangerous ground. On Article IV the Secretary of State's reply to the noble Lord was a little technical. After all, Bokhara was not an integral part of Russia, though it was controlled by Russia. The Secretary of State had described the position of the Ameer as only so far like that of our feudatory princes that we had charge of his foreign relations. The fact that she controlled the foreign relations of Madagascar made Madagascar part of France, politically speaking. Well, Afghanistan was on the border line, and when it was said that the whole basis of the Agreement was equal advantage, so far as trade was concerned, between Russia and this country, it seemed to him to be somewhat inconsistent that there should be no reciprocity. At the top of page 9 of the Agreement it was said:—

> "Any facilities which may have been, or should be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian trade and traders, should be equally enjoyed by Russian trade and traders."

Sir Charles Dilke.

He could not think that this Article was one which was really necessary, and it could only be defended upon technical grounds. Then came the words as to the consent of the Ameer. Now, were we going the right way to work to get the consent of the Ameer? Were we not in India taking steps calculated to raise the suspicions of the Ameer? We had never been able to come to terms with him as to the Mohmund frontier where we were making the line through the gorges of the Cabul River. Yet we were surveying a railway under fire right along to the Afghan frontier, for what reason Heaven alone knew. A very unwilling assent was given by the late Government, before it went out of office, to Lord Kitchener's scheme. There was plenty of time to have reversed that assent; but no practical steps had been taken by the Government to do so. Was it an essential part of the arrangement that it depended on the consent of the Ameer? There, he thought, the Government were inconsistent with themselves. The Agreement as to Seistan was based on a statement made in the House that had it not been for this arrangement India might have been placed in great danger. But for Seistan the Secretary of State explained we "must have imposed larger and larger demands on the revenues of India." Indian military expenditure had enormously increased within the last four or five years. The reductions were ridiculously small and only caused by financial rearrangement. The construction of the railway was still going on, and although the stations which had been proposed on the extreme frontier had been abandoned because they were untenable, there had been enormous expense incurred upon the scheme. He had shown his reasons against the Afghanistan portion of the Agreement. The scare, by which some people were deceived when Lord Kitchener's plan was brought in had come to an end. The defence of the plan was that it would counter-check the increased power of Russia in Central Asia. That scare was without foundation. The whole of the policy was inconsistent with the present policy of the Agreement with Russia. It was said that Russia had increased her strength in Central Asia from nominally 72,000, but actually 60,000 men, to 200,000. There was not a syllable of truth in that at all. The only truth was that Russia was bringing up her cadres to normal strength. This Afghan Agreement was inconsistent with the Kitchener policy of India, and with the present Indian expenditure.

SIR H. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.) said that a debate in Parliament on a foreign treaty afforded an opportunity to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to make an explanation of an international document of great importance. That opportunity had been largely availed of. It would be conceded by all that the noble Lord who had opened the discussion had, as had been said by the Foreign Secretary, spoken in a tone to which nobody could find exception. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman in reply was so thorough and conclusive and its tone was so admirable that one might well agree very little remained to be said. He had taken a very deep interest in this question for many years, and he would confine his remarks to what was within his own knowledge as to Russia and Russian statesmen. He was sure that the words of the Foreign Secretary would find a remarkable echo in the breasts of these statesmen, and that the Press of Russia would confirm it. Hostile criticisms on an accomplished treaty should obviously be confined within narrow limits, and should be made under a very grave sense of responsibility. Particularly should this be the case in regard to an Agreement with Russia, because to make a Convention with the Government of that country was a peculiarly difficult and delicate task. The interests touched upon were so widespread, so many were the national susceptibilities engaged, and the whole question was so complicated by mutual suspicions and jealousies, that it was an obvious duty to approach it with the greatest circumspection. He made that remark because he desired to comment on a speech by Lord Curzon in another place. The Foreign Secretary had spoken of it as mere rhetoric—a reproof with which every student of foreign affairs would surely concur. But still he thought that a further word of protest was needed. Lord Curzon spoke with the greater conspicuousness attaching to him as one who had come back fresh from a position of the greatest responsibility and weight. The noble Lord's speech was of great length; it was announced by himself as one that would be telegraphed that very day to the East. It was a very bitter attack on the details of the treaty with Russia which could only have the one result, so far as his words could carry weight elsewhere, of damaging the foreign policy of the present Government, and of his own country. In regard to Afghanistan, in the first place, Lord Curzon asked why was not advantage taken while the Ameer visited India to go into the whole of this matter and secure then his consent. It should be recollected that that visit was, at His Highness's own request, kept entirely free from high politics. Lord Curzon must have known that, and therefore it was a curious suggestion to be made by him. Further, Lord Curzon particularly pointed out that while we ought to have considered the Ameer we had deliberately ignored him; and that we had interfered improperly with his internal administration, and had tied his hands. And Lord Curzon added that he hoped the delay of His Highness's assent was only due to dilatory oriental methods—otherwise a situation of the greatest inconvenience and anxiety would arise. Lord Curzon could not have for a moment considered what effect his words would have on the oriental mind—especially when it was remembered what demands the Ameer was making on the Indian Government, and what an advantage it would be to the Ameer to have a strong card to play. He expressed the regret which must have been present to the mind of everybody who read that astonishing speech—a speech so capable of misconception and misrepresentation. What did the criticisms of the proposals in the Convention amount to? They were that this Government had conceded too much. In fact all the critics of the Convention—even the noble Lord opposite—had spoken as if the British Government had only to ask for conditions and these would be conceded at once by Russia. It would be impossible more completely to misconceive the situation which the Government had to face when they first came to consider this Convention. As a matter of fact, the Convention only recognised the *status quo*. He would like, with the permission of the House, to read one brief extract, to show what exactly was our relation to Russia when approaching this Convention, from a book by Mr. Dugald Stuart, a recent traveller in Persia—

> "No railway can at this moment be constructed in Persia; the New Customs Tariff cannot be completed or passed into law until approved by Russia; turnpike tolls—by no means scarce—are all in the hands of Russia; no vehicle can enter Kasvin (on the high road from Europe and the Caspian Sea) without paying toll to a Russian company; the entire country between Julfa (on the Russian eastern frontier) and Tabriz—a distance of 200 miles; and between Tabriz and Teheran—a distance of 400 miles—has quite recently been surveyed by Russian officials with the ostensible purpose of making roads; the entire route between Resht and Anzali on the Caspian Sea (and the direct road from Europe to Teheran) is in the hands of Russian companies, both as regards post carts and post stations; the Shah cannot purchase a rifle without the approval of the resident Cossack General, and as to raising money by a foreign loan or by the granting of concessions for mining or any other purpose known to free agents, it is simply prohibited in accordance with a bushel of protocols, treaties, and conventions between the two high contracting powers. Persia is in everything but name a Russian province."

That was the situation that had to be faced. It was not a case of "ask and have," but of saving something from the wreck. Not only was that the existing state of things, but the hold of Russia, the actual and potential hold, was almost overwhelming. With very little railway construction she would be able to pour enormous masses of troops into Persia. Suppose—and it was not an idle supposition, but was in the minds of many at the time — at any time during the Japanese War Russia had patched up an agreement with Japan, and had turned the Manchurian Army under General Kuropatkin, who knew every inch of Central Asia, on to the Persian frontier, and had then demanded concessions of every kind and description from Persia, what would our position have been? We should either have had to give way, or have been faced with the horrors of a land war of a colossal character, into which we should be forced most reluctantly, and from which we should have sought any honourable method of escape. The position of Russia in Persia was so strong that many thoughtful persons had urged the British Government to come to an arrangement with Russia by entirely abandoning our Persian interests. After studying the matter very carefully he had himself come to the conclusion that the best terms we could secure from Russia with regard to Persia were to permit her to have a commercial port on the Persian Gulf. The action of the Government in this Convention had been to save all they could from the wreck, and Lord Curzon and the noble Lord who had initiated this debate might be reminded that it was the Party to which they belonged that were chiefly responsible for running the ship of our Persian interests on the rocks. By this Convention we had obtained more than we could have hoped for, and, in his opinion, in view of the action of the British Government in past years, almost more than we deserved. With regard to Tibet he could only say that in the view of many who sat on the Ministerial side of the House we were not very much interested in that country. Lord Curzon had spoken of the Agreement as a humiliation. If that was so it was a very small one and it was more than made up for by the effect our action would have in China. China regarded Tibet with a peculiar solicitude and would gratefully appreciate our action in that matter. Even in its details the Convention would stand a very careful scrutiny. All depended of course upon the way in which it was intended to work, but every treaty and every Convention was in the same position. If there was an earnest desire on the part of the high contracting parties to make it effective it would be effective and most beneficial. If the high contracting parties did not intend that it should be effective then it would be in the same position as all those conventions which were never intended to be effective and would merely be waste of paper and ink. As it stood it commanded the approval of the House. The most striking fact in the East at the present time was that the various peoples were drawing together. There was springing up a peculiar racial spirit, a spirit of national patriotism, in the oriental mind. There was a strong recrudescence of vitality throughout the whole of the East. That spirit was by no means always a spirit fraught with goodwill towards Western civilisation or Western nations. Therefore it was particularly desirable that Western nations at this time should as far as possible abandon their jealousies and also draw near together in sympathy, in view of the grave and growing problems they would have to face in the East. This Convention was what a recent foreign minister would call a Convention of good Europeans. It had drawn two Western nations together in view of gathering difficulties in other parts of the world. All these years we had been backing the wrong horse. In every point of European politics Russia's hand had been against us, and ours, as she would say, had been against Russia. The danger of war with Russia had been one of the regular topics of the newspaper leader-writers for years, and it had been almost taken for granted by diplomatists. Whenever Russia chose she could cause us great anxiety and an enormous amount of expense by moving a few companies of troops up to the Afghan frontier. So long had this been the case that it had become almost a postulate that Russia and England were bound in the nature of things at some time to come to blows—

> "Like rival thunders from opposed poles,
> Rushing towards the shock that splits the world."

That was how Russia and England were regarded by almost every other nation. For many years he had done all in his power to help forward this understanding, and now that it had come it was a matter for great gratification, both for personal and impersonal reasons. He thanked the Government for this Convention, and he warmly congratulated the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who by his skill and good fortune had at last accomplished what so many of his predecessors had failed to do.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley) said he had always regarded foreign affairs as a non-party question, and of all questions relating to foreign affairs he thought the question of safeguarding our great Indian Empire by upholding our commercial and political interests in the adjacent country of Persia was most certainly a non-party question. He had listened with great interest to the able speech of the noble Lord in criticism of this Convention, and with if possible deeper interest to the able defence which his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made in favour of the Convention, and he could only regret that the balance of advantages found in the Convention was not greater, so that the task of defending it might have been made easier. Six years ago he made a somewhat extended journey through Persia, and upon his return a debate took place in the House upon his moving an Amendment to the Address. That Amendment was seconded by the noble Lord who had initiated this debate. In that debate the question was treated as a non-party question, and he was bound to say that to-day he was largely in agreement with the Amendment which had been moved by the noble Lord. When he went through Persia six years ago specially to study the political and commercial situation he found that Russian influence was paramount in Northern Persia right from east to west, but that British influence and British trade were greatly in the ascendant throughout Southern Persia from Baluchistan on the one side to the Tigris on the other. The natural and equitable division so far as spheres of interest went in Persia would have been to have conceded to Russia a position of predominance in Northern Persia, but in all equity we should have had conceded to us the recognition of predominant influence throughout the southern portion of that country. Persia lent herself to such a division by her natural situation not on the lines agreed upon, but along the line of those great deserts which stretched through the centre to the ancient capital of Ispahan where the Russians had hardly a foothold; where they were striving to get a foothold, but where the Governor was most friendly and favourable to England. It was a very great disappointment to him to find that the Ispahan and the Baghdad trade route into Persia were included in the Russian sphere, and he thought it would have been more equitable if these had been placed in the neutral zone. He felt that there was a special responsiblity on a Liberal and Free Trade Government, which objected to protect our markets by imposing tariffs on goods coming into this country, to uphold and extend British markets in every part of the world. Even the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had been bound to admit that in the matter of the trade and commerce of this country we had got the worst of the bargain in the Convention with Russia with regard to Persia. Whilst the Russians had retained in their own sphere the whole of their trade routes down into Northern Persia, we had only two trade routes out of eleven in our sphere.

He was greatly disappointed that the British trade routes were not included in the British sphere. But no one in the House in considering the Convention could fail to consider it in even a still wider aspect. If he felt assured that the Convention would remove all causes of friction between Russia and this country in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, he would welcome it even with the unfavourable trade conditions it contained; but what was the position going to be in Persia? When this question was debated six years ago the Government announced their policy to be the upholding of British influence and trade in Southern Persia. They said we must not allow a railway to be brought down to the Persian Gulf from the North by Russia, and declared that we must maintain our influence paramount in the Persian Gulf which we had policed for the benefit of all nations for over a hundred years. He had hoped that the present Government would have continued that policy in negotiating this Convention, but though they had got rid of the danger that was supposed to exist of Russia building a railway from Seistan to Bunder Abbas on the Persian Gulf, they had left two-thirds of the coast of Persia west of Bunder Abbas in the neutral sphere. The Government had conceded to Russia an equal right with ourselves to build railways in the neutral sphere, and therefore this Convention appeared to facilitate the construction of a railway through Northern Persia into the neutral sphere west of Bunder Abbas and down to the Persian Gulf. How could we enter a word of protest against Germany also building a railway down to the head of the Persian Gulf in face of this arrangement with Russia? What would then become of the paramount influence of this country in the Persian Gulf when Germany on the one hand and Russia on the other were the owners of railways right down to the Persian Gulf? That disposed entirely of the question of our exceptional interest in the Persian Gulf, which seemed to him to become of somewhat small value. Why should we object to these railway systems being brought down to the Persian Gulf? The Government six years ago—and one would have thought that this point would have been more particularly dwelt upon in the debate that day—said that we objected to have a Russian railway down to the Persian Gulf because it would turn the flank of the North-Western frontier of India. We recognised that it would be difficult for large armies to be moved across the mountainous districts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan, but the danger would be infinitely greater if Russia and Germany were in the Persian Gulf with commercial ports which might very soon become naval stations. Might they not then be in a position to endanger our Indian Empire? Our expenditure for military defence would go up far beyond what the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean had suggested, and very far above the high figure it had already reached. We were the trustees of the Indian nations, and it was our duty to safeguard their position and their interests in India in any Agreement of this sort. It had been said that that was what we had done. Nobody desired more earnestly than he that all the benefits that could be desired should spring from this Convention with Russia. Everybody was agreed as to the wisdom of making *entente cordiale* arrangements with all the great nations of the world, but they must not shut their eyes to the facts as to whether in the making of them they would remove or perpetuate causes of friction. He would instance the case of Afghanistan. The Ameer had always objected to any foreign agents going into his country, and he absolutely refused to allow any to enter. He remembered going through the Khyber Pass and up to the frontier of Afghanistan, and when he came within half a mile of that frontier he had to return, because he was told that if they went further the party would be fired at. He went six years ago through Baluchistan to the Afghan frontier and the same thing happened. But an hon. Member of this House went to the Afghan frontier and had courage enough to cross it, and the Afghan officials were courteous enough to allow him to enter a fort. The officials, however, became doubtful as to the wisdom of what they had done, and refused to allow him to leave, and he spent some very uncomfortable hours in that fort. But what was the result of all this? The whole of the officials of that fort were put to death by order of the Ameer of Afghanistan. Afghan frontier officials were not allowed to have any negotiations or association with the officials of the neighbouring Power. The Convention began with the declaration on the part of both contracting nations that they would not send any agents to Afghanistan, and yet further on a provision was made under certain conditions to send commercial agents. In the East those who were ostensibly commercial agents were invariably really political agents. There seemed little likelihood of the Ameer agreeing to this part of the Convention. Otherwise, in regard to Afghanistan, they had reason to be well satisfied with the arrangement. The only fear he had was as to friction arising in regard to matters which would have been much better kept out of the Agreement altogether. There was no more fruitful source of friction and of greater danger than these small frontier questions which could be magnified and sometimes turned into causes of wars. With regard to Tibet he had always thought that the Expedition was a blunder and a waste of money. The less we had to do with Tibet the better. He was not an advocate of the forward policy either in Persia or in Afghanistan. They had had too much of it in the direction of Afghanistan. Untold millions had been wasted in preparing the North-west frontier for defence where, humanly speaking, it was impossible that it should ever be attacked. Now the scene had shifted further south, and they were told that this triangular sphere in Persia would safeguard the Indian Empire. It was really the sphere which belonged to us years ago and which we had quite unnecessarily handed over some time ago to Persia. The difficulties that we had with Persia at the time of the debate six years ago, included this, that the Russian Government had concluded a commercial treaty with Persia without consultation with us, and had imposed tariffs favourable to the goods which she was in the habit of sending and against those which we sent. In addition to that Russia had debarred Persia from giving railway concessions to any outside party other than to Russia, or from contracting loans except from Russia. He did not find that these three points had been dealt with and cleared up by the Convention, and he would like to know what provision had been made in regard to our entering in the not distant future into a direct commercial treaty with Persia, and whether the prohibition of the Persian Government contracting loans with parties other than the Russian Government had been abolished as well as the prohibition in regard to railway construction. He gathered that railway construction was exclusively conceded to us in our sphere, but the worst of it was that commercially considered, the whole of Persia where commercial enterprises were at all likely to be of value, was in the Russian sphere. Commercially speaking, the British sphere had few, if any, commercial possibilities; therefore, as far as British trade and commerce went, he could not but come to the conclusion that we had fared badly, and could only hope that otherwise the Convention would create more friendly feeling with Russia, and that there might grow up between the two nations a mutuality of consultation and of settling difficulties and disputes when they arose, not only in Afghanistan, Persia, and Tibet, but also in Europe and every other part of the world. If that proved to be the case, if it lessened the chance of war and promoted the great cause of peace, humanity, and progress, even though the balance of advantage, commercially at any rate, seemed to be so much against us, we must be glad that the Convention, even in its present form, had been concluded.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said he had listened with considerable attention to his hon. friend's speech, and was very anxious to know the conclusion at which he had arrived in regard to the Motion, but noticed that he was somewhat reticent in that respect. The Resolution declared that the House was of opinion that the principle of the Agreement was right. He was glad that lordly and discordant voices had been raised on the point, although one noble Lord had resolved the old opinion that Russia was so untrustworthy that no one with any self-respect would enter into an Agreement with her at all. It was a welcome sign that that argument, with one exception, had been abandoned even on the other side of the House. The second point of the Resolution was that the Agreement involved in several points a material sacrifice of British interests. That was what he had been trying to find some particulars of in the debate. The hon. Member for Hornsey had reminded them of his various journeys. He (Mr. Griffith) also could say that he had been in that part of the world, but with so many exceptions he could hardly expect to be believed when he made an assertion of that kind. To have visited the country seemed to him no great qualification for making a relevant speech on the Resolution, therefore he would not state one way or the other whether he had been there or not. What were the British interests that had been sacrificed? The hon. Member said that six years ago the whole of Northern Persia was under Russian domination; therefore, as far as the Northern part was concerned, we had given Russia nothing more than she enjoyed already. With regard to the Southern portion, there was a neutral zone, and a South Eastern portion called our sphere of influence. What he wanted to point out was that the Convention dealt with concessions and not with trade; trade with Persia was not touched by the Convention. It only touched concessions upon some particular points. When he was there, there was a great concession in British hands, the Imperial Tobacco Regie. It failed, not because of commercial incapacity, but because of Russian intrigue, and although there was a Conservative Government in power they hardly lifted up their hands to save it, and concessions were cancelled. Really, especially when a Conservative Government was in power, they must not make too much of these concessions. They were difficult to obtain, and in the Northern sphere of influence they would be met by Russian intrigue. If he was right in his construction he did not think the trade of the country would be affected in the slightest degree. The Northern trade was already in the hands of Russia, and the Southern trade would not be affected prejudicially by the Agreement. Persia was divided into three portions, and British trade was never to invade the Russian portion, and Russian trade was never to invade ours. It was part of the Convention that there should be equal opportunity for all nations for trade and commerce in Persia.

MR. JOSEPH WALTON: We have debarred ourselves in the Russian sphere from undertaking any commercial enterprise.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH said it was more important to have read the Convention than to have been to Persia. There had been very few concessions even to British subjects. The trade of this country did not depend so much upon concessions as upon the industry and energy of particular trades employed in commercial affairs. It was true that concessions as such were prohibited to us within this area, but our sphere of influence, which he agreed was far less important commercially than the Northern, was limited to us. But the point was, when entering into a bargain of this kind to see how much they could get. There were heaps more things that they would like to get. The question was how much they could get, and whether what they got was worth what they had sacrificed in getting it. He was in favour of the principle of an Agreement with Russia. The meaning of a vote of censure was that if one were in the place of the Secretary of State one would have entered into another bargain, getting the same results at a far cheaper price. What had they got? They had given up very little, but as a matter of fact they had very little to give up there. It was not likely that they would ever have had any concession at all under the old state of things, and if they had had a concession, Russia would have seen that it was cancelled. By this treaty they had got a great security and protection for the Indian frontier. He trusted that the treaty which the Secretary for Foreign Affairs had made himself responsible for would be a monument of amity and peace for many years, if not for generations to come, between this country and Russia. He believed that by this treaty harmony would be substituted for rivalry, and peace for the intrigue which had been going on for so many years. If that result was achieved, or only partially achieved, they would have obtained in return for those alleged concessions in Afghanistan and Tibet, a substantial result of which this country might be proud. He trusted the House would reject the Resolution.

*MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) said he took part in the debate because he represented a great commercial constituency, and every Member who did that ought to take a keen interest in the effects of the Convention. He was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Anglesey state that the Convention did not touch trade or commerce. He thought that was an amazing statement to make. If that assertion were true he hardly knew why the treaty had been made at all. Did the hon. Member really suggest that none of the Articles of the Convention touched commerce at all; Upon that point he would ask him to consult the hon. Member for Ripon. The preamble of the Convention seemed to hold out great and excellent expectations which were, in fact, only partly fulfilled. They rather suggested that the Government started out with good intentions which they had been unable to realise or fulfil. He could not help wondering whether when they were negotiating the Convention, any point ever arose at which they made up their minds that they would rather have no Convention at all than grant what Russia was insisting upon. But the preamble was at variance with the actual Convention, and looked as if it was outlining a policy which every man could agree to without discussion, but when they looked into the treaty they found that the preamble had been departed from to the advantage of Russia. There must be a limit somewhere, and if too hard terms were being imposed, or two high a price was asked for some of the stipulations, it would have been better to have risked putting off the Agreement and have refused to come to terms at the present time. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said the all-important object in mind was thestrategical gain in Seistan. The right hon. Baronet, however, seemed to minimise from that point of view the commercial sacrifices which he had really made. He stated that the strategical objects were almost the sole objects, and no doubt he had succeeded in getting Seistan safeguarded. The Opposition had no desire to question its value. He was not, however, quite certain that the right hon. Baronet's strategical objects had been well carried out in one or two other respects, and as regarded the North-west frontier he could not help thinking that it would have been wiser if he could have drawn a line from Zulfikar down to Gazik. They had given up that piece of land, and therefore the neutral ground came close up to the Afghan frontier. He thought it was unfortunate that that particular portion of the frontier should be closely contiguous to the neutral zone and not be entirely under our own control. The right hon. Baronet had said that that portion of land between Gazik and Zulfikar was not important. Surely it must have some importance or else why was it that Russia pressed that it should be given up? What was intended originally to be embodied in the Convention was a line drawn from Zulfikar down to Gazik, and then southward, and that had been given up in consequence of the demands of Russia. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman was satisfied that he had got all he thought was necessary strategically, because the commercial sacrifices which he had made elsewhere were very great indeed, and the Convention could be severely criticised from these aspects. To sum up, the Convention showed a much greater tendency to give Russia equality of opportunity than she had shown to us. We had given Russia equality of opportunity in Afghanistan, we had given her more than equality of opportunity as regarded trade routes in Persia, and very nearly equality of control in Tibet. He ventured to think that commercially speaking the Agreement was far from a good one. The loss of the Baghdad, Khanikin, Kasr-i-Shirin trade route, which had already been discussed, was very serious. He was surprised to hear the hon. Member for South Wolverhampton pointing out that the whole of the north of Persia was already in the hands of Russia and that, therefore, they might strike it out as an asset for negotiation. As a matter of fact in Ispahan and Yezd certainly there was a large British trade and much sympathy entertained for the British. In giving up those towns, which were very influential as being the end of the trade routes on the Karun river and from Bushire, and to some extent from Bunder Abbas, they were by no means giving up places which were entirely under Russian control. On the contrary, they were remarkably under our own control, and we were thereby losing entirely the position which we had obtained at some cost in the central portion of Persia. There was nothing in the Convention to prevent Russian railways being extended first to Ispahan and Yezd, and then on to the Persian Gulf, and we were bound not to oppose such railways by Article III. of the Persian part of the Agreement. The immediate effect of the Convention was to give Russia a sphere of influence in Persia of no less than 272,800 square miles of the best portion of Persia; the neutral zone consisted of 217,180 square miles, whereas our own British sphere was only 141,100 square miles. He regretted that owing to the natural trade advantages offered in the Russian sphere, the advantages to this country of the neutral zone were very seriously diminished. The line drawn to divide the spheres through Persia was not a very fortunate one. It need not be a question of custom houses, because there were many other ways of influencing trade besides the line of custom houses, especially in Oriental parts. The admission of Russia to the best districts of Persia would be quite effective in securing Russian influence there, and creating an incentive to further encroachments southwards, against which the Convention did not provide. He thought also that the treaty showed a material sacrifice of British interests in respect of some of the provisions relating to Afghanistan. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had said that Afghanistan was to be regarded as a buffer state. He did not think that the provisions of the Convention quite carried out that object. He was more particularly uneasy in regard to two or three of the Articles. Article I. of the Convention concerning Afghanistan contained the following—

> "The Russian Government, on their part, declare that they recognise Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and they engage that all their political relations with Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Britannic Majesty's Government; and they further engage not to send any agents into Afghanistan."

That seemed to be contradictory to the sense of Article IV., which said—

> "Should the progress of trade establish the necessity for commercial agents, the two Governments will agree as to what measures shall be taken, due regard, of course, being had to the Ameer's sovereign rights."

We were not sure after all that Russia would not send any agents into Afghanistan. It was probable that sooner or later trade would develop, and if it did Russia would be entitled to say, "We want agents there, and we want a friendly agreement about it." It was painfully true that agents created influence if they were recognised agents, and perhaps even more if they were unrecognised. That influence was very real indeed in such quarters as Afghanistan. As to the Persian Gulf, he thought there was some risk of a material sacrifice of British interests in that quarter also. He wished that Notes had been exchanged more specifically laying down what were the special interests which Great Britain possessed there. It was all very well to embody in a despatch the fact that the Russian Government did not deny the special commercial interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf, but it would have been far better to have in black and white, under proper signatures representing both countries, a clear statement that we had specific interests which Russia willingly accepted rather than vague interests which she appeared grudgingly to admit. There was room left for misunderstandings in the Convention. He would like to emphasise what had been said about the assent of the Ameer of Afghanistan. It had not been alleged that any steps were being taken to secure the assent of the Ameer. He dreaded to think what would be the situation supposing that his assent was not obtained—and it might take months or indeed years to obtain it—because by the Persian portions of the Convention we had given a free hand to Russia in that quarter, while if the Ameer did not consent so far as Afghanistan was concerned, we had no agreement that Russia would not interfere in Afghanistan. This opened out a vista of possibilities on which we might disagree with the Russian Government. Article IV. said—

> "His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Russian Government affirm their adherence to the principle of equality of commercial opportunity in Afghanistan, and they agree that any facilities which may have been, or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian trade and traders, shall be equally enjoyed by Russian trade and traders."

Supposing that special facilities were secured by Russian trade and traders, there was no stipulation there that British trade and traders were to have equal facilities. He would like to know from the Foreign Secretary why we had here deliberately committed ourselves to something which was not equality of opportunity. And perhaps the occasion might have been further improved by endeavouring to get equal opportunity for British traders in the Khiva and Bokhara markets. He was still not quite certain whether the Agreement we made with Tibet in 1904 remained untrammelled in consequence of this Convention with Russia. That Agreement with Tibet was secured at considerable cost to ourselves and redounded to the credit of Sir Francis Younghusband's military and diplomatic skill. In this connection he could not help asking why Russia should have been admitted to have a voice at all in regard to Tibet, which was hundreds of miles from the frontier of Russia. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had pointed out with much ability that he thought it was wisest to leave the Persian Gulf out of the Convention. He wished the right hon. Gentleman had thought it equally wise to leave Tibet out of the Convention. They had been asked to judge of the Convention as a whole, and he was quite willing to do so. He wished to be loyal to the Convention which the Government had entered into. He was an immense believer in the continuity of foreign policy. He fully recognised the desire of Foreign Office officials to get out of the way certain chronic difficulties which had stood in the way of international friendship for many years. He wished he was quite certain that the conditions to which we had bound ourselves would not give rise to misunderstandings, and he could not help fearing that in some respects they would. They could not altogether forget what Russian assurances had been in the past. He had no desire to put a stumbling block in the way of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but he would remind the House that on February 28th, 1884, Lord Granville wrote to Sir Edward Thornton after the annexation of Merv in the following terms—

> "Baron Mohrenheim was instructed to assure me that the views of the Emperor as regards the relations between the two countries in Central Asia were in no way changed, and that it was His Majesty's desire that these relations should continue to be marked by a spirit of friendly sincerity, and an equitable appreciation of our mutual interests. I told Baron Mohrenheim that . . . I could not pretend that the news had produced no effect on our minds. Assurances had constantly been given, not only by the Russian Government, but by the Emperor himself, on the subject of Merv—assurances which seemed to put out of the question, at all events for the present and under existing circumstances, any annexation of Merv. . . There was some occasion for surprise, when two Governments have for a long time been exchanging communications and explanations upon a subject, if one of them suddenly acted in a sense opposite to its assurances without any previous communication with the Power with whom it had carried on this friendly exchange of ideas. . . . . I told him that as he had broached the subject, I had thought it fair to let him know that the news had not been received by us with indifference."

He could not help feeling that Lord Granville's words might be disagreeably applicable to the future of this settlement, if both parties did not loyally adhere to the spirit of it. Unless they could make sure that the Russian Government would carry out the Convention in the spirit with which he believed our Government had signed it, there might be complications ahead. He was glad to hope that Russia would keep the Convention with loyalty to us. Her change of policy was a welcome sign, and he prayed that the right hon. Gentleman's efforts might be successful in securing international peace for a long time to come.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) said it seemed to him to have been very easy for hon. Gentlemen opposite to discover small faults in the Convention considered merely as a commercial treaty. He thought, however, that commercial affairs would protect themselves. The last time he was in the Persian Gulf there was a rumour that Russia had an idea of getting there by means of a strip of land leading down to the Gulf on its western border, but he believed that that was a fable. At all events, our Indian frontier was now secured on the side of Seistan; that being so, and the danger of invasion being averted, he urged the right hon. the Secretary for India to reduce the military expenditure in India, especially on huge fortifications on the North-west frontier. India was a poor country, and he hoped that the Secretary of State for India would put his veto on these fortifications. He was extremely glad, as he believed everyone else was, that the long-extended feud between this country and Russia might now be considered over. He remembered when he was in Russia in the old days the considerable feeling which existed there in regard to our expansion towards Central Asia, just as in this country there was suspicion of Russian expansion in the same regions. He trusted that that nagging feeling had disappeared completely, and that a new era had arisen in our relations with Russia. This Convention, he believed, would go a long way towards securing peace with Russia, and with the whole world.

*SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire) said that on an occasion like this hon. Members who had been long connected with India ought to have some opportunity of explaining what they thought the effect of the Convention would be on our policy in India, on the feeling and loyalty of the people of India, and the amount of taxation they would have to bear. He would not enter into the give and take, the gain and loss in regard to that part of the Convention which related to the Persian Gulf, or to the Northern part of Persia, where this country had never much chance of profitable trade. Considering the long controversy between Great Britain and Russia, he conceived that the important part of the Convention was its political part, and chiefly in regard to the affairs of India and the 300 millions of our Indian subjects. He would be sorry to cast the slightest suspicion on the good faith of Russia in entering into the Convention, which, he thought, looked at broadly, would largely remove what had burdened the minds of British statesmen and Indian rulers for nearly a century—viz., the Russian bogey. The people of India had been disturbed by wars and rumours of wars, by the fear of invasion of India, leading to four wars with Afghanistan, and on one occasion to the total slaughter of our retreating army. This Convention would form a new departure, and lead to the reduction of that immense military expenditure in India which went on not only in time of war but in times of profound peace. The drain on the Indian tax-payer never ceased. The people of India did not always remember that we protected their country; what they saw and felt was that we taxed them. It was our duty, looking to the matter from a statesmanlike point of view, to consider these feelings of our Indian subjects. As a rule they were adverse to war, and he believed that if our system had allowed of their being consulted, and if we had taken them into our confidence they would have refused to go into the war with Tibet. The people of India would, therefore, be glad to hear that all these peaceful arrangements had been concluded with Russia, and would be greatly satisfied with the speech of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when they saw it reported in the vernacular Press. Those among them who wished to uphold our Government would be pleased, and this Convention would only be displeasing to those intriguers who desired to injure it. These last would be sorry to hear that the hatchet was being buried between us and the Czar of Russia. Lord Lawrence, great among Indian Viceroys, whose experience embraced a long Indian career, testified at a critical time of our history, that if we wished to keep the people loyal to us in times of stress we ought not to worry them with war taxes. Lord Lawrence, in protesting against war with Afghanistan during Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty, said that it was our duty and our best policy as a matter of statecraft not to keep establishments beyond our Indian frontiers. Further, he said that in governing a large Empire like India, made up of many different nationalities, we ought at all times to be careful to spend the taxes on things that benefited them, things they could see, such as roads, bridges, railways, and canals. Thus we might keep their loyalty by spending money in India, and not by throwing it away beyond the frontier among the wilder tribes. That kind of adventure beyond our own boundaries had a tendency, as Lord Lawrence pointed out, to involve us in war. He might take as an instance, our effort to get a missionary out of Abyssinia. What was the result? The Abyssinian War. He thought that one of the results of this Convention would be that all those who had had Indian experience, and who had shared in however small degree the great burden which rested upon the Government of that country both night and day, would feel great satisfaction that this country had started a policy of friendliness with Russia, and had actually come to terms with her. With such vast interests as this country possessed in Asia, the maintenance of which led to such enormous expenditure even in times of peace, they ought to be grateful that the Government had carried on the peaceful policy as regarded the nations of Europe, a policy started by the Government they succeeded. He said that to the Indian world, and to all those interested in the great cause of peace and humanity, this Convention ought to mark an era in diplomatic arrangements.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs), said that while he agreed with the general tenour of the remarks of the last speaker, he did not altogether quite follow him when he congratulated the House upon this pleasant recognition of Russia, inasmuch as they had to realise that so much had already been lost. But he did recognise that it was a fortunate fact that this Agreement should be entered into and agreed that it should be judged as a whole and not in part, and also that the position of Russia in Northern Persia had to a great extent been decided in favour of Russia before this Agreement came under consideration. But of all the speeches which had been delivered, the one that most astonished him was that of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton. He did not know whether he rightly caught the hon. Gentleman's remarks, but if he had ever been to Persia, he was the only person he had ever seen who had visited that country who thought that this country should calmly contemplate Russia having a port upon the Persian Gulf. That statement led him to discount the whole of the hon. Member's speech, or otherwise he should have said that the writer of the book from which he read was very accurate, and that what he said was very correct and very much to the point; because it was the fact that Northern Persia had fallen under the dominion of Russia, and that there everything was past praying for. He remembered some years ago when he went to Southern Persia from India he found it to be a bit of India over again, and just like Sindh; but when he went to Northern Persia he found that it was a bit of Russia over again and just like the Caucasus. But those days had somewhat changed, and when he last visited the country there could be no doubt that the "peaceful penetration," he thought it was called, of Russia southward had been continued to such an extent as very seriously to impair the position which we had acquired in the Persian Gulf. Although we had 80 per cent. of the trade and 90 per cent. of the shipping, it was the fact that within the last few years the Russian position had been considerably strengthened. Had this Agreement been entered into twenty or thirty years ago, it would have been perfectly fair for the present Foreign Secretary to have pressed for a far wider recognition of our position in the Persian Gulf. He thought the flaw in the argument directed against the Agreement was that hon. Gentlemen had been far too ready to accept the position which we did once occupy as that which we occupied now. It was a pity that when we were in the full bloom of prosperity we did not do more than we did, because even during all her hard struggles Russia never relaxed her grasp upon Persia, and we had still to deal with her as a powerful and predominant factor. He believed the reasons given by the Government for not including the Persian Gulf in this instrument were sound, and he thought they were admitted by Lord Lansdowne in another place to be sound, but the point which he wished to make with regard to the Gulf was this. He thought he was right in supposing that one of the main reasons that led to the making of this Convention, and it was obvious that it was so, was that the Russians were in such a position in Khorasan that they could come through Seistan down to the Arabian Sea, which would have been a serious menace to our position in India, and therefore on that ground more than anything else we were compelled to make this instrument. He congratulated the Government on having made a satisfactory arrangement with regard to Seistan and the neighbourhood of Baluchistan, but from the entrance to the Gulf, where we previously had a strong position, right up to the frontier of Turkish Arabia, that coast which was once almost a part of British India would cease to fall within our sphere of influence. He quite understood that that did not mean—he knew enough about it to know that—that we were to give up our trade there or anywhere else. That did not mean the extinction of our activities there, but it did mean this: that the Russians were in an equal position with ourselves to ask for a concession for a railway there down to the Persian Gulf. It seemed to him that if a railway was made down to the Persian Gulf, it was almost as bad as if it were made down to the Arabian Sea, although it was not exactly the same thing, because there was the narrow neck of the Gulf in our sphere. Still, it was a very serious matter that under this Convention the Russians would have as good a chance as ourselves in bringing a railway down to the northern shore of the Gulf. His particula object in rising was to urge upon the Foreign Secretary the necessity of our acting so as to improve the position which we still held. He did not think that any advantage could result from discussion of a treaty already entered into, but he did consider that it was of the greatest importance to see how, that treaty having been entered upon, we stood and what we should do to make our position safe. If we at once applied for concessions for railways in that neutral zone in which our interest up to now had been predominant, Russia would not be able to apply, and they knew how ready she was to do so. If we did not apply for these concessions we might find Russia coming down to the Gulf. Why should not we get the concession and then they could not get it? The *Novœ Vremya,* a well-informed Russian paper, stated—

> "We have secured our position in Northern Persia without sacrificing our right to find an outlet in the north-western portion of the Persian Gulf."

If that represented the Russian opinion, as he was sure it did, he entertained some apprehension in regard to our commercial position in the Gulf, because in the East the fact that the railways of a country went into the hands of a great Power made it difficult for other countries to progress in a commercial way in the same territory. At the same time it was the fact that the Imperial Bank of Persia, whose chairman, Sir Lepel Griffin, and directors were excellent authorities, thought this instrument was satisfactory from the commercial point of view, and Sir George Mackenzie, the head of the great British Indian Steam Navigation Company which carried on our business in, and was the outward and visible sign of British supremacy in, the Gulf, also thought that the Convention should not be opposed from the commercial point of view, as it might be regarded in that respect as satisfactory, if only we now set to work to develop our position. He thought there would only be satisfaction if England and British India proceeded to develop Southern Persia, and opened up the country with roads or railways. But suppose the Government did open up trade roads from the Gulf through their own sphere of influence. If they did that with some guarantee, for what it was worth, from Persia to bear a portion of the cost, and some guarantee from British India that she also would find a small sum, it would be encouraging in every way. As the hon. Member for Ripon would be detrimentally affected by and opposed to this Convention he would suggest to the hon. Member that it might be possible for him to enter into a trade convention with Russia under the terms of which he might be able to dispose of the roads he had constructed to Russia, and by that means get back some of the capital he had expended to use it in Southern Persia. His hon. friend did not apparently think the money could be got back, but if it could the position would not be quite hopeless. His hon. friend must remember that it really was not the fact that because a sphere of influence was placed under one Power, other Powers were debarred from trading within that sphere of influence. Anybody who examined the instrument would see that it did not go as far as that. But it was the case that a Power with a particular sphere of influence would be able to turn to the very best possible advantage all the resources of that territory. He felt perfectly certain that the Imperial Bank of Persia and the British India Steam Navigation Company would not regard this Convention as being so disastrous from a commercial point of view as the hon. Member for Ripon. Steps should be taken to obtain concessions to build railways down to the Gulf, and some arrangements made with British India to develop trade routes. It was all very well to say the Russians had done this, that, and the other, but the Russians spend their money. They had put down their money in North Persia, and it was the same there as in other places; where people put down their money they were extremely likely to acquire a good deal of influence. Another subject which this Convention almost touched upon was the Baghdad Railway. When he remembered that Baghdad was full of our Indian fellow-subjects, and that when the railway was built it would be built by Indians; when he remembered that more than 100 years ago the Wali of Baghdad, who was, after the fashion of Turkish viceroys then, verging on independence, appealed to the Government of India for officers to make him independent, and that the Government of India sent those officers, but that the Government of this country, which was usually in such matters wrong, sent them back—when he remembered these things he regretted the action which the Government then took, and the fact that we had no hold upon Baghdad. It had been represented that the action of Russia would bring Germany down to Baghdad, and if that was the case there was all the more reason for our taking every opportunity to get an interest in the line, so that if the whole line could not be inter-nationalised, we might at least have the predominant interest in the section from Baghdad to the Gulf. It was of supreme importance to British India and ourselves that this should be so. As to Tibet he would only say that the noble Lord who moved this Motion was very wise when he said he would say very little on this point; because the Government of which the noble Lord was a member threw away the whole of the results of the Tibet expedition. Nor could it be deemed that the Russians had no interest in Tibet, as this matter could not be measured as Lord Curzon measured it, in miles. Supposing our Indian frontier was only 100 miles from Lhassa and Russia was 1,500 miles, what then? The Russians had a considerable interest, though more remote than our own. With regard to Afghanistan he hoped that what had been said by his right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean would not be taken as a conclusive proof of the failure of Lord Kitchener's scheme. We should await the result of this expedition before arriving at the result.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE said he made no reference to the expedition whatever. He referred to the railway through the Cabul gorge on the other side of the Khyber.

*MR. REES said he thought the right hon. Gentleman had said something as to the cost of Lord Kitchener's scheme, which brought in the expedition, but if he was mistaken he would not proceed with that point. The hon. Member for Roxburghshire had said that as one consequence of this Convention a large and immediate reduction should be made in the Indian Army. He hoped that no such short-sighted and ill-informed policy would be pursued. It was by no means the fact that this Convention affected that position or made it less necessary than it was before for us to be "as a strong man armed that keepeth his house safe." No other position could be safe for us in India. No doubt he would hear, too, in the course of the debate a great deal about excessive taxation and all those other things which were rolled off the tongue so easily by those who knew nothing about this matter, and who looked at it through Congress glasses. He wondered if such critics had ever heard of how Russia with one steel thread had maintained a large army in Manchuria, and how much the more easily she could maintain an army on the frontiers of Afghanistan, which was—and it was of no use to disguise the matter—after all practically the British Indian frontier. The interests of the Indian people were to be found only in peace, and peace was only maintained by our being strong enough to make it difficult for any aggressor to break the peace. That was the chief factor in this matter. A strong army was as necessary for the peace of India as a supreme navy was for that of the British Empire throughout the world. The hon. Member was very severe upon the Tibet question, but when he said he spoke for 300,000,000 of the people of India, who were averse to that war, he wondered how the hon. Member had been able to collect into a phonograph, as it were, the opinions of 300,000,000 people of India who had never even heard of the war. It fairly astonished him to hear an hon. Gentleman take upon himself a responsibility of that sort, especially when like his hon. friend he knew something about the country. It did not astonish him when a person who knew nothing about India made a statement of that kind, because the temerity of such people was in exact ratio to their inexperience. The India Office as well as the Foreign Office had great cause to be satisfied with the settlement that had been effected, and no sufficiently conclusive arguments had been brought against it in spite of the fact that had Persia been what it was thought by many to be, it would have been impossible to have defended this Convention, if it dealt with Persia alone. Nobody ever supposed that an invasion of India could take place through Seistan, and he himself doubted very much whether India could be invaded through Afghanistan. No soldier of any repute had ever seriously contemplated an invasion of India through Afghanistan or Baluchistan. It was the other problem, that of a foreign Power acquiring a station on the Arabian Sea or the Persian Gulf and turning the flank of the frontier, which was so embarrassing to the Indian Government, but he believed this Convention, in spite of all its defects, supplied the best available means for solving this difficult problem.

*SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.) said he regarded this Convention with somewhat mingled feelings. He thought portions of it were excellent. For instance, he had nothing but praise for the section which related to Tibet, and he regarded with some complacency those clauses, for substantially they gave effect to the identical position which he had preached in the Press and on the public platform some three or four years ago at a time when he was not supported by any official sympathy. These provisions were the death knell of the policy followed by Lord Curzon when he embarked on that ill-starred expedition, and they would effectually prevent any of his successors from making a similar attempt to invade the most inhospitable and least productive country in the world. The most important point was the repetition of the absolute recognition of the suzerainty of China over Tibet. That was definitely acknowledged when China entered into the arena and when the negotiations were transferred to Pekin. China had won in that contest as to whether her suzerainty should be recognised or not. It had been recognised and it was now re-affirmed by this Convention. He thought the clauses relating to Afghanistan were on the whole very satisfactory. There was a clause, wisely inserted he thought, which recognised the Ameer's Sovereign rights. He was not aware that they had been definitely recognised in any public treaty or similar document before. They were recognised here, and in every other respect he found that the Agreement simply confirmed existing political relations with regard to Afghanistan. Clause 5 said that the present arrangement could only come into force when the Government should have notified to Russia the consent of the Ameer. He trusted there might be no difficulty in obtaining the consent of the Ameer, but it was remarkable that up to date that consent did not seem to have been given. That in itself was a cause of some anxiety. When he came to the Persian portion, he regretted to say his feelings towards the Convention were less sympathetic. He was delighted to see in the forefront the recognition of, and the determination to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, but the procedure by which that was to be effected was very strange and almost unprecedented. After stating that as our object the Convention proceeded calmly to slice the country up into three parts, two of which would be under the protection, or at all events within the sphere of influence, of one or other of the high contracting parties, while the intermediary portion was left to either or both of the countries to exploit with the concurrence of the other. Several speakers had contemplated, as quite within a measurable distance of time, the political concessions referred to in these arrangements as being not unlikely to involve the occupation of the territories concerned. He would be sorry to think that, but the terms of these clauses were such as practically to abrogate the integrity and independence of Persia in the areas concerned, and it was the weakest point in the Agreement that while it purported to protect the independence and integrity of the country it adopted definite measures which could only lead to the disintegration of the country and the loss of its independence.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) said he could not possibly agree with the remark of the hon. Member for Anglesey that there would be no loss of trade whatever. We had undoubtedly surrendered much of the value of three trade routes into the hands of Russia, and although it might be said that the conditions of our trade would remain practically as they were we had the experience of previous interventions of Russian officials with our commerce in south-eastern Persia, where these officials, with the co-operation of Belgian underlings, managed to embarrass our trade very materially, and that kind of treatment might very well be repeated. Although nominally our openings for commerce were to remain intact, by surrendering the most important route—the Kasr-i-Shirin–Kermanshah route—we had rendered ourselves liable to very serious impediments indeed in the furtherance of our trade. This Kasr-i-Shirin route was the highway for all our heavy seaborne goods which come up the Gulf to Basra, thence by river to Baghdad, and thence to Khanikin and Kasr-i-Shirin into Persia. We had given that important route bodily over to Russia—a serious sacrifice it might turn out to be. There were two other trade routes, the Mohammerah and the Bushire routes, and their termini were placed within the Russian sphere. He could not imagine why. It would be just as easy to keep them within the neutral sphere. That was undoubtedly a handicap to our trade. The Russians had from time immemorial always found a means of handicapping and hampering British trade. Of course, from their point of view they were perfectly right. On the opposite side of the account they found that the whole six Russian trade routes from the north, where trade was most brisk, had been kept within the Russian sphere. The case then stood thus. Three of our trade routes had termini within the Russian sphere, one was completely obliterated, and the whole of the six Russian trade routes had been kept within the Russian sphere. That did not sound as if our trade had passed unscathed through the Convention. He hoped that as a counterblast the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs would be borne in mind, that should there be any shadow of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, as was far from improbable, for the purpose of combining to carry on the Baghdad Railway and projecting it along the Khanikin – Kasr-i-Shirin line into Persia, we should enter a *caveat* and endeavour to secure that the building of the line, and the responsibility, and its upkeep, and its administration and working, from the canals above Baghdad right down to the mouth of the Gulf, should be in British hands. That would be only a fair *quid pro quo* for the sacrifices which we had made, and which he did not deny might perhaps have been worth making for the great end sought to be gained by the Convention. Still we ought to have our *quid pro quo*. He quite admitted that we had made very considerable sacrifices, but he would not deny that if we obtained the supreme end sought—namely, perfect immunity from that perpetual scaremongering and worry on the Indian frontier consequent upon the overshadowing of the Russian Colossus — these sacrifices, great as they were, need not count for much. He was prepared fully to endorse every word of the Convention on that condition. But the question was: Had we secured this great object? He believed that the British sphere on the south-east raised an effective barrier against any aggression along the line of Seistan and Kandahar, and no doubt that was of vital importance—if Russia kept to her bargains. But there was a dangerous corner away on the extreme north, to the south of the Russian railway lines. That corner was peopled by three or four tribes—the Usbegs, the Jamshudis and others—who were non-Afghan but they were subjects of the Ameer Although they were his subjects—and we were largely responsible for that—those tribes were notoriously hostile to the Ameer. What would happen in case these tribes caused a rising on the Russian side? What would this country do? Disturbances might arise which would land them in warlike operations. It was a great pity that in this Convention, as a supplementary document, some means were not taken and put on record by which, should such disturbances arise, some authority should be empowered, by agreement of the two contracting Powers and the Ameer, to intervene and settle them. Failing such an arrangement a collision between Afghanistan and Russia might be precipitated and the old nightmare be revived. That was a danger zone to which he desired to call attention. But, after all was said and done, he thought these territorial guarantees for the security of our position on the shores of the Persian Gulf and for the peace of India were, on the whole, very poor substitutes for what he considered was the only safe and permanent guarantee they ought to have, and that did not lie in conventions, but in the great democratic movement now in progress in Russia. They could not expect the Russian people while they were "cribbed, cabined, and confined" under an autocrat, to have the power to dictate the foreign policy of Russia. The people of Russia were now plodding on with great difficulty towards constitutional government, and when once they got hold of the purse strings of the nation they could then restrain the aggressive tendencies of the Czar and his grand dukes by simply refusing the necessary supplies. He hoped the British people and, on opportunity occurring, the British Government, would give all the support they could to the great democratic movement now in progress in Russia.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon) said he certainly took no pleasure in the ungrateful task of criticising a Government with whose general aims in the spheres of domestic, fiscal, and foreign policy he was in hearty agreement. It had been truly said by a newspaper, which was stalwart in its support of the Government, that one of the greatest assets of the present Government with the public at large was the belief that it could be trusted as much as any Government which had recently held office to guard the interests of the Empire. Certainly in his own constituency this view of the duty of any Liberal Government had constantly been emphasised; and they had always repudiated with warmth the imputation that it formed any part of the Liberal creed to belittle the importance to a nation situated like our own, of those great over-sea interests, upon which our population and the development of our national wealth depended, and which were the natural outlet for the energies of our countrymen. But Liberalism had another and a not less important side. Whenever a people were engaged in a struggle for freedom, or in other words, in a struggle after self-realisation, they always felt that England, and especially the Party to which he had the honour to belong, would take their part and sympathise with them, and if circumstances permitted, convert that sympathy into practical support. The question of British interests as they might be affected by this Convention had been well discussed that evening, and in another place. But very little reference had been made to its effect upon the destinies of the smaller nations which formed the *corpus vile* of the experiments and dispositions. The question they had to consider had two sides. First, would the Convention benefit, or was it likely to prejudice, our own direct interests, political and commercial, in the countries affected? Secondly, was it framed in the true interests of those countries themselves? He had travelled extensively in Persia and the adjacent countries. He came of a family the members of which, either as servants of the Crown or as private citizens, long resident in the East, had laboured each in their own sphere for three generations to build up the British position in Western Asia. He, as the latest and humblest representative of that family, had done his best to carry forward this task, which kept him in daily touch with Asiatic affairs. As his name had been mentioned more than once, not only in the debate in another place, but also during the progress of this discussion, he should like to state to the House quite frankly the nature of his private interests in those countries. They consisted of internal communications—steamers on the great rivers and roads from the terminal stations on those rivers to the cities of the interior. He had no share, or none worth mentioning, in the export trade of this country to the East, which had passed by a natural process of evolution largely into the hands of native merchants, who had come over to reside in Manchester and other great manufacturing centres, and who consigned the goods they purchased there to their relatives in the East. If as a result of this Convention the export trade of Great Britain and India to Persia, which already amounted to about £2,000,000 a year, and was capable of almost indefinite expansion underwent a considerable shrinkage in favour of Russian trade, then he presumed that these native merchants would migrate from Manchester to Russia, and Russian trade instead of British would flow over communications he had mentioned, which, it was true, were specially designed to serve the interests of British commerce, but which, being main arteries of traffic, would be of use to any other Power which might step into our shoes. His friends and he had been concerned in the construction of three roads in Persia. Two of these three roads—namely, those from Kum to Tehran and from Kum to Sultanabad—had been placed from end to end by the two right hon. Gentlemen sitting below him in the Russian sphere of influence. The terminus of the third road across the mountains to Isfahan had been treated in exactly the same way, and yet the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had stated in the present debate that under this Agreement we had given up nothing which was not gone before, and that we had given up merely trading possibilities. But these were solid assets of British commerce in the country. Let the House mark this. Though existing concessions were safeguarded in the Convention, any further facilities on these routes, as for instance, the laying of a light railway, must, he imagined, be obtained through Russia. Surely, the tendency would be that these British enterprises would in time become Russian, and that he thought would be bad for British and Indian trade. Emphasis had been laid on the fact both in the debate in the House of Lords and in that House, that the Convention had received the approval of the directors of the Imperial Bank of Persia. They might be quite right. From the point of view of finance, they might be fully justified. He would be inclined to share their view so far as any pecuniary interests of his own were concerned. They were no doubt safeguarded by the Convention, but that was not precisely the spirit in which his friends and himself had worked. He could honestly say for himself that he had not touched one single penny, whether in the shape of fees or dividends or anything else, in connection with any of those enterprises in Persia. At the outset he arranged with the Foreign Office and at the instance of the Foreign Office, that the revenues of the principal road—a road of 270 miles across mountains, which he personally surveyed, and which was constructed under his direction—should be collected and enjoyed by the semi-independent chiefs who ruled over that country. These revenues must now amount to a very considerable sum, as the trade had always been on the increase, and had very often doubled itself in successive years. All or nearly all of this trade, he hoped the House would bear in mind, was British or Indian trade—none of it Russian. He could only say for himself that if he had ever suspected that a Convention of this nature would receive the signature of British Ministers of the Crown, that trade route would never have been built. But to return to the twofold question with which he started, how did the Convention affect direct British interests, and was it framed in the true interests of the smaller nations with which it dealt? Persia was so much the most important subject of the Convention that he would not occupy the time at his disposal by commenting on the provisions concerning Afghanistan and Tibet. He would only say this about those provisions. In all of them there was no equality of stipulation as between ourselves and Russia. Could the Foreign Secretary show them in connection with the provisions relating to Afghanistan and Tibet anything which the Russian Government had conceded to us or given up to us except the undertaking not to break promises which Russia had already given to us not less than eleven times between 1870 and 1900? As regarded Tibet, it seemed to him that the hated yoke of China was still further rivetted upon that country, because by the Convention we agreed with Russia not to have any dealings with Tibet except through the Government of China. And as regarded Afghanistan it could scarcely be pleasing for the Ameer to see a line drawn across his western frontier to the Persian Gulf. But he would go on to Persia, for that was the portion of the Convention which was calculated to cause the gravest results. He would like to ask the House to consider what had been the trend of our policy in Persia. A distance of 2,000 miles separated the western frontier of our Indian Empire from the seaboard of the Mediterranean, and all this expanse of country was still held by neutral and buffer states. It was the existence of these buffer states —Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan— which had enabled us to hold India with comparatively a handful of men. Our task had been to keep these buffer states on their legs, and to prevent them from becoming the prey of the great military Powers of Europe. Many Members of the House would perhaps remember how, when the Russians attempted to break into this series of buffer states through Armenia, Indian troops were called together. We practically announced our readiness to proclaim war, and Russia was prevented from permanently occupying any unit of that territory which she temporarily occupied during the Russo-Turkish war. Of all these buffer states Persia was obviously the most important, as it was through Persia that the shortest road lay to the Persian Gulf. One great difficulty with all these states had been to keep them on their legs. We had had our difficulties with Turkey and with Persia. We had seen Russian predominance spreading itself over Persia and Persia being drawn more steadily into the orbit of Russian influence. Suddenly, by a lucky turn of the wheel, circumstances entirely changed. Two things happened—first, the Russians suffered defeat at the hands of the Japanese; secondly, Persia threw off the trammels of her ancient despotism, and made a serious endeavour to range herself on the side of reformed and progressive peoples. A peaceful revolution took place in Persia, and that it was peaceful was largely due to ourselves. Thousands of Persian refugees took shelter in our Legation at Teheran and at the Consulate at Ispahan. A Parliament was called together and still remained the focus of the reform movement. He had taken the trouble to inquire into the seriousness of that movement. He was given to understand by these whom he had always considered to be the best informed both in Persia and in this country that there were serious elements in the reform movement in Persia, and that if Persia was only left to herself with a reasonable chance she might be able to work out her own salvation. That peaceful revolution was proceeding apace when this Convention was signed. The Convention divided Persia into what had been recognised in answers to questions across the floor of the House as spheres of influence. They had been told by right hon. Gentlemen that these spheres of influence might, under certain circumstances, even include the power to Russia to lease a certain portion of her sphere in the same manner that portions of Chinese territory had been leased. It was also settled under the Convention how the revenues of Persia were to be dealt with as between the British and Russian financiers and that was, he supposed, the reason why British financiers were so well satisfied. It was true that the preamble of the Convention stated that the integrity and independence of Persia were to be respected. But Persians pointed out that similar formulæ had been used in respect to Egypt and Morocco. Could we wonder then that the Persian people were filled with horror at this Convention? Persian opinion was no longer inarticulate as it used to be. There were at present no less than ninety newspapers in Persia and forty-five of these were published in the capital. He would quote the following sentence from the principal daily paper published in Teheran. It said—

> "Although the ostensible purpose of this Convention is to preserve the independence of Persia, yet those versed in political subtleties are well aware that whenever one of the Powers (the great Powers of Europe) has acquired influence, it has done so under cover of just such specious and plausible words. If these two Powers really desire the continuance of Persian sovereignty, there would really have been no need for such a Convention."

These were the milder part of the series of articles. A well-informed Persian writer in a letter to Professor Browne, of Cambridge said—

> "The action of England has alienated from her the good opinion and sympathy of all Persians. What the political object of England can be in making for the sake of Russia this great act of renunciation in Persia, only Sir Edward Grey knows. It passes our comprehension. Its immediate effect in Persia is, however, the complete destruction of the friendship which the Persians have entertained for the English."

That he thought it was no exaggeration to say, was the opinion of quite nine-tenths of the educated people in Persia—not of the grandees, not of the people who might like to fish in troubled waters, and to make capital out of the rivalry of two great Powers like Russia and England—the nature of which rivalry had been very well described by Lord Lansdowne—but by the leaders of the reform movement. He would give a concrete instance in order to make the House realise what this Convention meant to the Persians. Let them suppose that England was in the throes of a domestic revolution, and that Scotland and Wales were the counterparts of Russia and England. For the purpose of his illustration Scotland and Wales would have a population many times more numerous than that of England, and let them suppose that with overwhelming resources the two countries entered into a Convention for the maintenance of peace and order in portions of England which would be described as adjoining or in the neighbourhood of the Scottish or Welsh borders. The Scottish portion would come down to a line to include Liverpool and London; and on the Welsh side the line would run through Shrewsbury to Gloucester. The rest of England, including Birmingham, would be made into a neutral sphere. Then let them suppose that another neighbour, Ireland, were to land 25,000 men in the Scottish sphere—that was the number of the force with which Turkey had invaded Persian territory—and that the Scots were debating whether they should come down and turn the Irish out for the purpose of maintaining law and order. Let them suppose also that our treasury was empty, that we had no fleet, and that we had adopted the most modern ideas and disbanded our army. Such being the situation, we would be asked to work out our own salvation, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland being anxious, forsooth, to maintain our integrity and independence. That was not an exaggerated analogy of what was taking place in Persia. Surely, if there was a moment above all others when it was unwise to discuss spheres of influence it was now, when Persia was in so unhappy a position. After a time, when Persia was in full possession of her own powers of self assertion it might be all right; but at a critical time like the present it was most unwise to place half the country, including the capital and all the centres of the reform movement, within the Russian sphere of influence. Revolutions could not be carried on with kid gloves; and a provision which made Russia the arbiter in so vast an area was tantamount to handing over the Persian reform movement to the tender mercies of a foreign despotism. If both parties had been sincere in their desire to maintain the integrity of Persia a much better and far simpler arrangement could have been made. What could have been more reasonable than that the two Powers should agree that in the critical condition of Persia, and for a definite period, neither would seek any concession without consulting the other; that in the event of Persia being unable to protect their subjects, they should confer as to the steps to be taken; that neither Power should advance money to Persia without consulting the other, and that they should agree together as to the steps to be taken at Constantinople to prevent the violation of the Persian frontier. At this point the hon. Member suddenly interrupted his speech, having been given to understand that two right hon. Gentlemen desired to address the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): The hon. Gentleman had a right to speak on this subject, and I am sorry he cut short his remarks before he came to what I take to be the most interesting aspect of this debate—namely, the effect of the Agreement with Russia on British policy and British interests. I think everybody will admit that the debate to-night has thrown a light upon these questions which the debates in the other House had not succeeded in throwing upon them. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs has given an account of the policy of His Majesty's Government which we could hardly have collected from any study of the speeches of his colleagues in the other House. I do not in the least mean that there was any contradiction between the two, but there was certainly an emphasis on certain aspects of the question given by the right hon. Gentleman that we should never have conjectured from reading the utterances of his colleagues in another place. What does the right hon. Gentleman rest on in defending this

Agreement? He rests partly upon a ground in which he has our fullest sympathies, the ground, namely, of producing good relations between two great Powers who are neighbours in many parts of the world, and whose interests touch each other in more than one quarter of the globe. In the second place, he has, apart from those general considerations, rested the weight of his case entirely, or almost entirely, on strategical considerations. His view put shortly is this:—That the strategical gain of the Convention arranged with Russia is so important that the concessions which have had to be given in order that that gain might be secured have been well worth giving. A very able noble friend of mine earlier in the evening, and with an authority which I certainly do not possess of having travelled over the regions concerned, under-rated the value of the strategical gain which the Government have secured by this Convention. I am disposed to take on this particular aspect of the question a more favourable view either than my noble friend or than the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean. The latter right hon. Gentleman quoted me as having advanced [the opinion that the chief strategical danger to which India was exposed was an invasion from the region of the Oxus through the great ranges of the Himalayas. I have not had time to refer to the speech on which the right hon. Gentleman based that view, but I can hardly believe that I said that.

Sir CHARLES DILKE said he had not put it crudely. He said that that seemed predominant with the right hon. Gentleman at that particular moment, on account of railways.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I am not in a position to deal with the detailed suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman. But if any members of the present Administration have taken the trouble to read various documents which I left behind in the Defence Committee, they must be well aware that that does not represent any view I ever held. Though invasion from the region of the Oxus and Russian concentration railways on the Oxus undoubtedly are an element of great importance which has to be considered, not less important is the possible danger which may arise to India from invasion through Herat and through Seistan. What is the character of the strategic protection which India now enjoys? It is not, obviously, in the number of troops which the two Powers can relatively command at home. Russia has a more numerous and greater army than Great Britain. The safety of India lies in the fact that before India can be touched any invading force has to go through a region of extraordinary natural difficulty, largely devoid of food, and defended by the most formidable natural bearriers. And so long as we can prevent those difficulties being surmounted in time of peace, so long in time of war we shall be relatively secure. But if we once allow the time of peace to be used to bring railways close up to the critical points of the great strategical bases created near our frontier, so long we shall be permitting that to be done which in time of war will give the masters of the great and numerous legions a very formidable advantage over those who command relatively few. I frankly admit that when the right hon. Gentleman comes down to the House and says categorically, as I understand him to-night, that he has given up what he recognises as great advantages in order that at no future time in a period of peace can a strategical railway be made towards Seistan, or anything be done which should turn Seistan potentially into a basis from which an attack could be made on India, I feel he really has obtained something for this country which has genuine strategic importance. I hope the right hon. Gentleman and the Government will feel that I have done full justice to that aspect of their argument, which I for one am the first to recognise. I do believe that the impossibility which now for ever bars the way of Russia in time of peace of doing anything to make Siestan the base of operations against India is a new and genuine addition to the defences of India. I cannot help wondering, however, whether it was not possible to have obtained that advantage at some less cost than the Government have thought necessary. I do not think the Secretary for Foreign Affairs has fully estimated the amount which he has given in order to obtain that advantage. Let me briefly deal with what the right hon. Gentleman has given in his own opinion, and then the additional amount which he has given in our opinion. When the right hon. Gentleman reproaches my noble friend, who opened the case for us to-night in a speech, the concentrated power of which everybody recognises, with having asked hypothetical questions—after all, it is by asking hypothetical questions that you can really test the value of an arrangement of this kind. You must project yourself into the future, and say: "If this state of things, or that, occurs, shall we have gained or lost?" Only hypothetical questions are the true test and measure by which every diplomatist and statesman must measure arrangement made at the present time. Now consider the case of Tibet. It is quite true, as the right hon. Gentleman said, that nobody on either side of the House desires that we should mix ourselves up with the affairs of Tibet. It is quite true, as the right hon. Gentleman said, that on the first night of the debate in this House I observed that the less any British or Indian Government had to do with the internal affairs of that country the better. But is that a full justification of what the Government have done? I should be inclined to use almost the same language about Afghanistan, and yet nobody would pretend that our interests in Afghanistan are not greater than those possessed by Russia; and yet Tibet, which adjoins our frontier, has been provided for in this Convention as if it adjoined the frontier of Russia. I confess I cannot appreciate the grounds on which that policy is based. Let me put to the right hon. Gentleman just this I hope not unduly hypothetical question. If Tibet ever breaks one of the treaties she has made with us, or Tibetan subjects invade India, are we to be precluded by this Agreement from remedying the evils from which we suffer? Russia cannot suffer from Tibet in that way, because Russia is not in the same position geographically. But if I am right in my reading of this Convention, we have to suffer anything from Tibet while Russia is left to suffer no such injuries, and yet we are precluded from remedy because we have deliberately tied our hands by this conpact with Russia. If I am right in my construction we are absolutely helpless in a case of that kind.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Tibet is bound to carry out the Lhassa Convention.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, but if Tibet does not carry out her treaty, I do not see how we are to make her unless we invade Tibet, and that if I mistake not, we are precluded from doing under this Agreement with Russia.

SIR EDWARD GREY: If that case occurred we should deal with it under the Convention with China.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If you are going to trust China to carry out Tibet's obligations with us you are trusting to a reed not merely broken, but a reed which has never been anything but broken. If Tibet is to insult us with impunity and our only remedy is to say to China: "Tibet has broken her treaty; see that Tibet carries out her obligations," our remedy is poor indeed. Before this Convention we were behind China. If Tibet refused to carry out a treaty, if China refused to compel Tibet to carry out a treaty, we were there with our power to see that our rights were respected. Let me turn hurriedly to Afghanistan. There are two quite separate aspects to be dealt with—the political and the commercial. We give the Russians power to deal with Afghanistan directly on everything which is local; we refuse to them any power to deal with Afghanistan on all matters which are not local but which deal with general policy. But there is no definition in the treaty of local and political affairs. If our object be to prevent all cause for controversy and difficulty between us and Russia, have we not left a most fruitful cause of difficulty and controversy by attempting no definition as to what distinguishes a purely local difficulty between the inhabitants on each side of the frontier and those other questions which involve larger issues? The right hon. Gentleman actually contemplates a period when it will be our duty to aid Russia to have commercial agents in Afghanistan. In that event may not a time come when Afghanistan will cease to have any efficiency as a buffer State? If you once allow the Russian commercial agent, who has always been indistinguishable from a Russian political agent, to have free access to all parts of Afghanistan, and contemplate a period when we are to assist the Russians to obtain this diplomatic service, I think the Government have gone rather out of their way to destroy the enormous importance and efficacy of that independent, isolated buffer State which was our great safeguard against political complications on the North-west frontier of India. On the political side there is a point touching Persia on which my noble friend put a question which the Secretary of State did not answer. My noble friend pointed out that in recent diplomacy it had become usual for great European Powers to lease for long periods portions of the territory of countries whose integrity they desired to maintain. If Persian integrity is to be maintained by leasing Persian territory to Russia, it is quite evident that you may have a concentration of Russian forces in parts of Persia, not, indeed, adjacent to Seistan, but adjacent to Herat; and though I do not wish to exaggerate the dangers of an invasion of Afghanistan from the point of view of Herat, I do most emphatically say that invasion would be rendered incomparably easier if Russia were practically master under a lease of a great fragment of Persian territory abutting on the north-western corner of the Afghan kingdom. A word upon the trade concessions we have made. When we turn to trade, surely the case is even worse. The right hon. Gentleman did not, I think, fully appreciate one of the arguments used by my noble friend. My noble friend pointed out that the termination of all the trade routes into Persia was in the Russian sphere of influence; but the full significance of that state of things cannot be appreciated until it is perceived that in order to make a trade route fully effective for trade purposes you must be able to improve communications either by roads or by railways. Neither roads nor railways will ever be made on the termination of these British trade routes, simply because they are British trade routes within the Russian sphere. Russia is a jealous commercial Power. She has a keen appreciation of the value to her of neutral and foreign markets; she will use every legitimate means within her power to prevent any British goods whatever coming within her sphere of influence. If you are dealing with a Power which holds these views and give that Power complete control over the termination of all your trade routes, it is clear that any improvement of those trade routes never will take place within any conceivable historic period. The whole of Russian influence would be used to prevent the improvement of the trade routes by which British imports can rival Russian imports, and as you give them the sole right to make any concession to make roads or railways it is quite obvious that, in so far as any portion of those trade routes runs within the Russian sphere, they will never get beyond the semi-barbaric condition in which Persian civilisation has left them. That is the argument which the right hon. Gentleman has not met, and has not, I think, thoroughly understood. I should have doubted whether the right hon. Gentleman is right when he says there is no power of putting differential tolls or taxes upon British goods; but if he has looked into that matter I do not desire to press him further. I must ask one question about the commercial aspect of the Afghanistan part of the Agreement. I am unable to understand this aspect of the Agreement. Afghanistan is not in any sense a portion of the British Empire, but, as has been pointed out, it has always been admitted to be within the British sphere of influence in a special and peculiar degree. What have we done? We have not merely stipulated that Russia is to have every advantage in Afghanistan that we get for our trade—a quite unnecessary stipulation as far as I can see—but the Government have not been content with giving that equality; they have gone really further, because if the words of the treaty are to be interpreted literally, while we are obliged to give Russia, or to induce the Afghans to give Russia every privilege that they give to us there is no reciprocal or corresponding provision in the treaty.

SIR EDWARD GREY: We engage to use our influence with the Ameer to secure that any facilities given to British traders are to be given to Russian traders. The reciprocal obligation would have been that Russia was to use her influence with the Ameer to secure for us that facilities which are given to Russian traders shall be given to British traders. That would be putting them on an equal footing with us. But we look to ourselves with the Ameer. It is our business to secure from the Ameer any concessions which he gives to Russian trade; it is not Russia's business to secure them for us.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I still think after that explanation that the language of the Convention is infelicitous. The words are these—

> "And they agree that any facilities which may have been or shall be hereafter obtained for British and British-Indian trade and traders, shall be equally enjoyed by Russian trade and traders."

There is nothing there about using our influence.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am sure my construction is right.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not press the matter, because I agree that things will have got to a very strange pass if the Russians have commercial privileges in Afghanistan which we do not possess. But when I come to the next point I do not think, judging from the right hon. Gentleman's speech, that he will have an answer which even he thinks can be satisfactory. Afghanistan, from the very nature of the interruption which the right hon. Gentleman has just made, stands in a perfectly peculiar and special relation to us, as nearly being a part of our Empire as an independent State can be. We promise that every privilege we get in Afghanistan shall be shared by Russia. Russia is not asked to give any corresponding privilege. There is no suggestion that they should offer any corresponding privilege in Central Asia or the parts of their territory which abut and border upon Afghanistan. How on earth is it to be justified? However much we differ on the fiscal questions and how the commercial difficulties of this country are to be met, every human being will agree as to the importance to the manufacturing nations of the world to have neutral markets on which to place their goods. Why on earth we should give up a market which we may control and get nothing in return for it seems to me to be utterly inexplicable. I do not press the point further. I desire to have a full reply from the Secretary for India. I will only sum up by saying that the Government have obtained a real and substantial gain in the arrangements they have made with regard to Seistan, but when I look to what they have given in Tibet, in Afghanistan, and in Persia, while Russia has given absolutely nothing in return except the privilege of making an extremely costly railway which might be a menace to India, it seems to me that, anxious as I am to be on the best terms with the great Powers of Europe, and desirous as I am to have friendly relations with Russia, I cannot regard the Agreement for which the Government are responsible as one in which they have scored a great diplomatic success, although it carries with it substantial advantages, which may, and I hope will, carry in addition some augmentation of that friendly feeling which is the great security of peace and goodwill among those who lead the civilised nations in Western Europe.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): There are one or two preliminary points that I would like to mention. This Convention is undoubtedly first and foremost an Indian treaty, and I do not believe that Lord Curzon went a step too far when he said the other day that it was, I think, the most momentous instrument that had ever been framed in connection with the great problems of the British position in Asia. After consultation with all those who have expert knowledge and great responsibility for Indian government, my own view is—and it is shared by the rest of the Government—that in reference to this great frontier of Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, it is an enormous gain for the great purposes of Indian government that this Convention should have been reached. The right hon. Gentleman has admitted the point made by the Foreign Secretary as to Seistan. The right hon. Gentleman admits that the strategical gain is an enormous one. But he asks us, "What is the cost?" and he fastened upon the Tibet portion of the Agreement. But what did the noble Lord who moved this Motion say about Tibet, speaking to his constituents last November? His words brush away all the argumentation of the right hon. Gentleman—

> "That part of the Convention that refers to Tibet does not call for any comment from me. Whatever may be thought of the policy adopted by the late Government, it was a policy that was very carefully considered, and that was accepted by both sides in Parliament, and the present Convention does very little more than endorse its leading propositions."

EARL PERCY: That is the negative aspect of the Convention. There is also a positive aspect.

MR. MORLEY: Why, then, did the noble Lord tell his constituents that he was merely putting the negative aspect of the case, and that there was something positive that would give an entirely different appearance to the facts? I do not think that will do. The noble Lord the Member for Hornsey has referred to our withdrawal from the Chumbi Valley. Has he really satisfied himself as to the specific conditions of our withdrawal from the occupation of the Chumbi? The first was that the indemnity should have been punctually paid in three years; the next was that the trade marts should have been effectively opened; and the third was that the other conditions of the Lhassa Convention should have been fulfilled. How could we have remained in the Chumbi Valley; with what face could we have confronted Russia or any other Power? The three instalments had been paid; the trade marts were effectively opened, though certain further revised regulations were to be made; and the third condition had been fairly fulfilled. Therefore we were bound, if we were to face Russia or to maintain our own self-respect in Asiatic politics, to come out of the Chumbi, and come out we have. The right hon. Gentleman has talked a great deal about leasing. Does he realise that there is no novelty in the facilities for leasing dealt with at all by the Convention? If it is possible now, it was possible before. That was a point which the right hon. Gentleman dwelt on without really good effect. The real point, from my point of view, and without in the least departing from the view expressed with such eloquence and power by the Foreign Secretary on the European and international aspect of the Convention, but regarding it from the Indian point of view, the Convention is pure gain. Difficulties may arise. They arise in all treaties. There never was a treaty made which did not contain what the right hon. Gentleman complains of in this Convention—ambiguities. They all contain ambiguities. Difficulties may arise in the construction of some clauses of this Convention. That is inevitable. I would like to say a word about the fact of this Motion having been made. I am not a sworn admirer of the proceedings in another place, but I do submit that it was a far better course for the critics, I will not say the assailants, of the Convention in another place to move, or not to move as it happened, for Papers. But the noble Lord has put down on the Paper of this House, and the right hon. Gentleman the leader of what has been a powerful Party has supported, a formal Motion. I do not think anything would terrify those two Gentlemen so much as the carrying of that Motion.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is a mere question of procedure. I have not the least desire to press a Motion of this sort on the House. But in another place they can deal with questions of this kind in a looser manner than we can, and, if moving for Papers would do, I would substitute that Motion at once. It was right to discuss the Convention, and all I wanted was to find the most innocuous form of Motion possible. I have not the least desire to divide, and I do not mean to divide the House.

MR. MORLEY: I am very pleased to hear the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. He is too responsible to take any action which would seem to disparage this treaty, and, above all, any action which would give a support to those persons and those influences in Russia which are not altogether in love with the treaty. What is vital, and I am glad to think that both in another place and here there is no doubt about it, is that both sides of the House, responsible leaders sitting on that bench and on this, are agreed, and that when Gentlemen opposite come into office they will observe the terms of the treaty.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Hear, hear.

MR. MORLEY: Of course, to us here that is perfectly obvious. We know it; but what is very important is that foreign Powers, who do not understand our procedure as well as we know it ourselves, should see that the fact of an important Member of the Opposition putting down a Motion disparaging the treaty really does not convey any serious consequences as to the future policy of this country. The noble Lord the Member for Hornsey, who has spent ten years, I think he said, amongst Asiatics, said the thing you want above all others is prestige. I put to the noble Lord and to the House this point. Do you think that the prestige of European Powers was furthered by the spectacle which has gone on for so many years in Persia—squalid rivalry between Russia and England about telegraph posts, about loans, and other things? Prestige! I cannot imagine a spectacle less calculated to impress those weaker Powers, those backward populations, with the virtues of European prestige. And for my part I think one of the most admirable parts of this Convention is the Persian part. It is quite true that my hon. friend the Member for Ripon has made a case in one or two details. But think what the change is. We now have got Persia herself, weak and rather distracted as she is by constitutional struggles, free from that squalid and mischievous rivalry, and you have these two great European Powers no longer rivals—I had almost called them confederates—in the sterilization of anything like moral progress or material progress in Persia. That is the broad answer that I would make to all those detailed criticisms. When you look at the thing as a whole, when you look at the Persian part of it as a whole, I submit that it is an Agreement that this country may not only be contented with, but proud of. My right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean drew attention to a point about the difference between the words "Convention" and "Agreement."

SIR CHARLES DILKE: I said I assumed, in the absence of a reply, that the consent of the Ameer applied to the whole of the five Articles.

MR. MORLEY: Of course my right hon. friend understands that it only applies to the Afghan section.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: Yes, the five Articles.

MR. MORLEY: My right hon. friend spoke of the Ameer, and said the Ameer had his own difficulties. The Government have been blamed because they did not ask the assent of the Ameer during the course of these negotiations, before the negotiations took the form of a signed Convention. It was impossible. Anybody who has had to do with the most humble negotiations knows that it is impossible to foretell what precise terms negotiation may take. We are asked: Why, when the Ameer was in India, did not you take that opportunity of discussing all these proposals with him? The answer to that is most plain. The Ameer made it part of his bargain almost—if I am using Court language—that no politics should be talked when he came into India. And by very specific instructions no politics were talked. But the impression of all those whom he saw in India—and I have read reports from a great many—was that he was a man of great tact, of great sagacity, and, in short, that he had the qualities for a ruler in a difficult situation. I would beg the critics of this Convention not to quarrel with us because there is some delay in the assent which the Ameer is asked to give to this Convention. We are bound to get his assent, and from all I can gather I am confident that within a given time we shall have that assent. The hon. Member for Ripon complained that we could not lay light railways along the roads. But Persia has already promised for a term of years not to give railway concessions to anybody. Therefore my right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary was right when he said we have given up nothing that there was any probability of our getting. The hon. Member spoke of leased ports. There are no leased ports in the Russian sphere.

MR. LYNCH said the principle of leasing had not yet been adopted in Persia, but he wished to know whether it would be possible for Russia, within her sphere of influence, to lease Persian territory.

MR. MORLEY: My answer to that is that it is neither more nor less likely than it was before this Convention. I will not detain the House a moment longer. When we consider the admirable language in which Lord Lansdowne, in another place, expressed his hopes and belief in this Convention, and when we take the language used to-night by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, I think His Majesty's Government and the country have reason to congratulate themselves upon this arrangement being made, and the foreign Powers concerned, whether the Ameer or other potentates, may know that what we have undertaken will be faithfully observed and carried out.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at one minute before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 18*th February*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Tyne Improvement.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a} (according to Order).

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill. Standing Order No. 86A considered (according to Order) and dispensed with; leave given for the Bill to be read 1^{a}.

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]. Read 2^{a}.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]. Presented, and (pursuant to leave given this day), read 1^{a}; and Bill referred to the Examiners.

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]; Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Read 3^{a} (according to Order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CERTIFIED INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES (ENTERIC FEVER AT BRENTRY).

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by R. W. Branthwaite, Esquire, M.D., D.P.H., His Majesty's Inspector under the Inebriates Act, concerning an outbreak of enteric fever at Brentry Certified Inebriate Reformatory. Presented (by Command) and ordered to lie on the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

Annual Report of the finances of the University of Aberdeen under the provisions of Section 30 of the Act, for the year 1906–1907.

NATIONAL DEBT (MILITARY SAVINGS BANKS).

Account of the gross amount of all moneys received and paid by the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt on account of the Fund for Military Savings Bank, from 19th September, 1845 to the 5th January, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

University Court Ordinance, No. 21 (Edinburgh No. 9), regulations as to bursaries, etc. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 18.)

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [H.L.]

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, towards the close of last session your Lordships were good enough to pass an amending Act with regard to patents and designs, and you also passed a measure to consolidate the whole of the Acts relating to that subject. Section 25 of the amending Act was transferred to the Consolidation Act as Section 92, and the question has arisen whether that transfer has in any way affected the right of appeal to your Lordships' House in the case of the revocation of a patent by the controller. This Bill is simply a declaration to the effect that this is not the case, and therefore I sincerely trust your Lordships will see your way to allow the Bill to be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*The Earl of Granard.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am not surprised that difficulties have arisen in consequence of the method in which the Patents Act was passed last

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

session. It was under great duress that your Lordships were asked to agree to that most important Bill. It so happened that, if I may use such a phrase in your Lordships' House, it was only by the skin of our teeth that we were able to pass the Patents Bill in time for it to be incorporated in the Consolidation Bill; and, when we came to the Consolidation Bill, the Amendments were presented in a volume and put in one question from the Woolsack. I ventured to say at the time that that was an unusual practice, and that it would have been a useful procedure to have referred the Bill to a Select Committee. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, however, assured me that there would not be mistakes. There have been mistakes, and I am not surprised.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): The noble Marquess is quite right in saying that the Bill of last year was brought up at a time when it was not easy to give it proper consideration, but I venture to assert that there was no mistake. What happened was that the amending Bill and the Consolidation Bill, running side by side, reached their final stages on the last day but one of the session. It has not been customary to send such Bills to a Select Committee, and the amending Bill in the last stage was grafted on the Consolidation Bill. The present Bill is to remove a doubt, which I really think has no foundation, arising out of the language used in grafting the amending Bill on the Consolidation Bill.

On Question, Bill read 2^a (according to order) and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) (No. 2) BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, the Bill which I have the honour to present to your Lordships for Second Reading is similar to that which Lord Courtney presented last year, and which your Lordships were good enough to pass. I will state, as briefly as possible,

The Marquess of Salisbury.

its main provisions. In any action at common law, in the case of a fatal accident, the representatives of the deceased are allowed to retain any benefit which may accrue from policies of insurance, together with any damages which the Court may see fit to award. In the case of Lord Campbell's Act, however, this is not so, for any money accruing from a policy taken out by the deceased has to be set off against the damages awarded by the Court. Lord Campbell's Act has been for a great number of years quiescent, but in 1905 the case of Sykes *v.* the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was decided, in which the Judge ruled that the amount accruing to the deceased under a policy of insurance must be deducted from the damages awarded by the jury. For instance, if a jury were inclined to award damages to the amount of £2,000 and the amount of insurance accruing to the deceased was £1,000, in that case they would only be able to give a verdict for £1,000; and your Lordships will therefore see that the person who is actually responsible for the death derives a benefit at the expense of the deceased. The privilege of contracting out has already been given by your Lordships in the Ocean Accident Insurance Act passed last year, and also, I think, in another similar Act. The result has been that these particular insurance companies have been given preferential treatment, and are in a much better position than any of the other insurance companies who have not availed themselves of private legislation. It is a curious thing, in regard to this, that private Acts have over-ruled a public Act. There are at present about twenty-five or thirty insurance companies anxious to promote private Bills with the object of contracting out of Lord Campbell's Act and thereby secure equality with the two companies to whom this privilege has been given. The provisions of this Bill are limited to Lord Campbell's Act, and in no way affect any other Acts. I therefore trust your Lordships will see your way to give the Bill a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Earl of Granard*)

On Question, Bill read 2^a (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH: My Lords, this is the same Bill as that to which your Lordships have just given a Second Reading. I am happy to think that the Government have taken up the measure, and I have only to move that the Order be discharged.

Order for the Second Reading discharged, and Bill (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT.

*THE EARL OF MOUNT-EDGCUMBE rose to ask whether His Majesty's Government would consider the desirability of postponing the enforcement of the provisions of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act as regarded the Volunteers until after their annual trainings, as in the case of the Militia. The noble Earl said: My Lords, I am sure that every Member of your Lordships' House who holds the King's Commission or Patent as Lieutenant of a county, and who has accepted the position of President of a County Association, is doing, and will do, his level best to make the territorial scheme a success, if possible, whatever may be his own personal opinion upon some of its features, and quite apart from the question whether he is politically a supporter or an opponent of His Majesty's present Government, upon whom, of course, rests the undivided responsibility of this vitally important measure. It is because I am so impressed with its vital importance and so anxious to see it succeed, that I ask the Question of which I have given notice.

My Question refers only to the Volunteers, and, in my own mind, chiefly to country corps. It refers incidentally to the Militia. I do not profess to understand all that is going to be done in regard to the Militia, but I believe I am right in supposing that those Militia battalions which are to be converted into Special Reserves, or third battalions of what are still called the Territorial regiments, are to remain as they are, Militia battalions pure and simple, until after their next training, and it is that which I suggest might be allowed also for the Volunteers.

I have long felt, and I think that my feeling is shared by some others, that the Territorial scheme has been rather unduly rushed. We have, of course, had ample time for forming our County Associations, and I believe that all these Associations have now been duly constituted, with the exception, perhaps, of the appointment of secretaries. It is not an easy thing to offer an appointment to a gentleman, perhaps to bring him home from abroad, without being in a position to tell him what salary you are able to offer, what the duties of the position are likely to be, the amount of clerical assistance those duties will necessitate, and how that clerical assistance is to be found. This has some bearing on my Question, because, if the whole of the Volunteer Force is to be cast into the melting-pot on the very day upon which the County Associations and their secretaries assume their functions, the work placed upon them for many months to come must, I venture to say, be at the least abnormal.

One sign, I thought, of somewhat premature haste was that we were asked some time ago definitely to state how many units, and what kind of units, we were prepared to raise in our respective counties. The Army Council insisted upon categorical answers to these questions, and answers had to be given, but it is obvious that they were given absolutely without knowledge. In my own case they were given under a mild form of protest, and I think that attitude justified by what the Secretary of State said on Friday last in a speech to the London Chamber of Commerce. Speaking of the Territorial Force, he said it was a purely volunteer force of citizens asked to take on themselves the duty of defending their hearths and homes, and that no man who was wise would venture to predict the response that would be made in the months on which we are entering. Yet this is what we were called upon to say.

When the Volunteers first came into being they enrolled themselves spontaneously, a company here, and a company there, and were afterwards formed into battalions and then into brigades. No one could have said then how many men would be provided by any particular county, and I do not think that anyone now can predict how many men in a corps will be ready to re-engage on the new terms of enlistment, and, still less, how many men who have been summarily disbanded will be prepared to start afresh as recruits in another arm. The commanding officers have not had their battalions together to consult or sound them on the matter, and, if they had, up till quite recently, at any rate, the information which they could have given would have been very meagre and uncertain. Even now, in spite of various leaflets, I should find it very difficult to explain to a man exactly the number of drills he would be called upon to attend in time of peace, exactly the amount of allowance he would have for camp, what uniform he would have to wear, or the name of his corps. In recruiting, all these are matters of singular importance. The form of attestation has not yet been distributed to those concerned.

There is also another Question I should like to ask, although I do not expect the noble Earl to answer it now, as I have not given him notice—namely, whether the refusal of an employer to give leave to a workman to attend camp will be accepted as a reasonable excuse for non-attendance, and exempt the man from military punishment. No one knows that at present; yet how much turns upon that! I have heard, I am sorry to say, of three firms who have already given their men notice that if they join the Territorial Force they must leave their service. I hope that is exceptional, but, at any rate, the point is one to be considered before a man would be likely to attest.

Turning to the changes to be brought into force on 31st March, some of which, I must say, appear to me to be unnecessary, and also regrettable, I have sometimes wondered whether it is absolutely necessary that a division of troops who are never to leave their own country, with its network of railways and its own resources, should be constituted on the same sealed pattern as a division of Regulars who may be embarked, at twenty-four hours' notice, for service in a hostile country. I have gone further, and wondered whether some of the units required to complete these ideal divisions are such as can satisfactorily, or even safely, be trained under the Volunteer system, and, as Mr. Haldane says, it must be the Volunteer system and nothing else, whatever name you call it by. The units I am thinking of are Field Artillery and Horse Artillery. I suppose I am wrong if, as I believe, some officers of high distinction are sanguine enough to hope that complete divisions, with Cavalry, Artillery, Infantry, Engineers, and transport, will be ready for mobilisation by next summer. If that is probable, nothing could be more satisfactory, though I do not myself see how you can possibly get more than twenty-four drills out of any man, recruit or otherwise, during the three months which will elapse between this and then. If there is any doubt as to the success of the immediate working of this plan, it seems a pity if, by hasty action, you should risk a loss of any large proportion of the good material which we have already—magnificent material, I think it was called by an illustrious visitor—and should do that on the day on which the County Associations, who are supposed to be your advisers from the civilian and popular standpoint, take up their work.

It has been said that the new Army comes into existence on 31st March or 1st April. We have the order for a Church parade on the following Sunday—5th April—to render thanks for the patriotic spirit which has hitherto imbued our Yeomanry and Volunteers, and to ask a blessing on the Territorial Force. I ventured to ask, but I have not received an answer, whether that was supposed to be the last Church parade of the Volunteers, to give thanks for their past patriotism, or whether it was to be the first Church parade of the new Force. But surely the new Force cannot be spoken of as in existence! You cannot have enlisted a single recruit, or equipped him, or put him through his facings, between 31st March and 5th April. The Force can only then consist of the present Volunteers minus all those battalions which have been summarily disbanded, and all those men who find it impossible to enlist on the new terms. The delay which I venture to suggest would give time for the County Associations to get into working order, to inquire into the conditions and requirements of the different units, to form some scheme for their action before the arduous and complicated duties they will have to perform are absolutely thrust upon them. It would give time for the commanding officers to ascertain the feeling of their men, and so enable the Associations to report with some degree of knowledge, and give also to the Army Council some information which might be useful to them and to the country as to what it is all going to cost.

The Secretary of State has recently recognised that the changes in regard to the civilian Army will cost a great deal more than he anticipated, and a great deal more than it costs now. And yet he holds out hopes of reduced Army Estimates! That can only mean that economies are to be carried out in the Regular Force, and the money expended on the Volunteers. Much as I admire the Volunteers, I regard that with alarm. I know I shall be told that any postponement now will upset the financial arrangements for the year. I should think myself that the direct effect upon the finances would be in favour of the taxpayer, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be rather glad of a certain number of months reprieve from the additional charges which will come upon him, including one whole year's clothing account, which appears to have been forgotten, and to have only just been put into a Supplementary Estimate.

I conclude as I began, by saying that I think all those who are connected with County Associations are most anxious to make the scheme a success, but I think it would have been better, and more conducive to success, if it had not been pressed so hastily, and if, instead of its being carried out by a stroke of the pen, as regards all the destructive part of it, on the very day when the tremendous responsibility of reconstruction on new and hard-and-fast lines is imposed on the County Associations—if instead of that you could have given more time for the successors of the men who originally created the Volunteer Force, and have kept it going ever since, to consider your proposal and offer to meet your requirements, as I feel sanguine they would do, in the old Volunteer spirit.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE: My Lords, on behalf of two counties I should like strongly to support the noble Lord's request. The noble Lord has said that all the County Associations are now formed. I am afraid that is not quite the case. Owing to accidents, for which, I believe, the counties on whose behalf I am speaking were not responsible, our Associations will only meet for the first time as a complete body to-morrow. But, of course, there is no secretary. We are called upon to change three battalions into two—a matter which is excessively difficult owing to topographical and geographical considerations and local jealousies. I believe it can be done, but it will, I think, be absolutely impossible to make the necessary redistribution and arrangements before 31st March. I am afraid that it will mean that, if the War Office refuse to recognise the existing three battalions after 31st March, there can be no training for the men in those counties this year, which I should think would be a very serious disadvantage, both for the men themselves and for the future of the Territorial Force. I hope it may be possible for the battalions to remain as they are for this training.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of PORTSMOUTH): My Lords, my noble friend who has just sat down gave us an extremely interesting speech, and if I may say so, touched upon a good many larger questions than that involved in the notice on the Paper. I think he himself rather anticipated that I should be unable to comply with his request. Much as we must all appreciate the difficulties of starting a great scheme of this kind, the postponement of it would involve us in still greater difficulty and complication. In the first place, a great deal of the preliminary work in connection with the formation of the Territorial Force has been accomplished during the recess. The ninety-three County Associations have all been incorporated, and their presidents are already in active communication with the War Office regarding the various details of the work to be assigned to them. In fact a Supplementary Estimate amounting to about £350,000 has just been voted by an economical House of Commons for the sole purpose of wiping out the old Volunteer debt and enabling the new force to start on its own financial basis in the new financial year.

Numerous instances have already been given by Volunteer corps of their readiness to accept the new system loyally, and there has been nothing in the nature of an official demand for a postponement of the Act. All over the country annual distributions of prizes to Volunteer corps have been held, which, by the way, afforded my right hon. friend the Secretary of State an opportunity of establishing a record in speech-making, and at none of these functions was there anything to indicate that the Volunteers wanted a *moratorium.* But, above all, nothing in the nature of such suggestion was made at the time which would have been most opportune for its consideration—namely, when the Bill was being discussed by your Lordships.

Moreover, I cannot admit that there is much analogy between the case of the Volunteers and that of the Militia. The terms of service in the case of the former have not been radically altered. It is true that a definite period of engagement within a maximum of four years has been laid down, but then the Bill gives power to the proper authorities to relieve men from the obligation of completing it in certain circumstances. But the Territorial Force will still be, like the Volunteers, a purely home defence force, and the periods of annual training will be much the same. The case of the Militia is very different. They are asked in the first place to become a Reserve for the Regular Army bound to service abroad, in the second place to become liable for drafting if the contingency demands it, and in the third place to undergo a preliminary training of six months as compared with the preliminary training of six weeks prescribed for the old Militia. The War Office quite appreciate the gravity of the changes in the case of the Militia, and they quite understand the importance of the suggestion made by those noble Lords who have always made the Militia their special care. It was in such circumstances that, after careful consideration, I was empowered on behalf of His Majesty's Government to give the Parliamentary undertaking that the Militia battalions selected to form the Special Reserve would not be touched until after their commanding officers had had the opportunity afforded by the annual training of explaining to the men the new conditions and using their influence with them to make the new arrangement as successful as possible. As regards what was said by Lord Carlisle, if the noble Earl will confer with me on the subject I will consider how far we can meet the case to which he referred.

*VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I have no doubt your Lordships will sympathise with the difficulty in which the noble Earl finds himself in putting off for a considerable period the final consummation of the Territorial Force. But there are two points on which I had rather hoped he would have said something, but on which we are still left in doubt, and which, I fear, if the Government carry out their present proposal to constitute the force at the end of next month, may prove to be a considerable stumbling-block in the way. In the first place, a very considerable uneasiness exists in regard to the Volunteer battalions that are to be reduced. It is not clear at present whether they are to be summarily reduced at the end of next month, or whether they are to be allowed, at the end of their normal engagement, gradually to fritter away and disappear. The second point refers to the attestation form to be signed by men on joining the Territorial Army. It contains what have been described by several County Associations as minatory clauses. A man asked to sign the form is told that if he joins the Territorial Army he will make himself liable to three months imprisonment, I think with hard labour, if he falsely answers any of the questions it contains. One of the questions is, "Are you married?" Some of the men are afraid that if they marry after signing the attestation form they will render themselves liable to three months imprisonment with hard labour. It is very desirable that nothing should be said or put forward officially which is likely in any way to frighten those intending to take the new terms of service. I think there is a little disposition on the part of the War Office to regard the Territorial Force too much as a *fait accompli*, and to ignore the very serious sacrifices which have to be made. With regard to the proposed Church parade on 5th April, to which my noble friend behind me alluded, can your Lordships imagine anything more absurd than to suggest to a Lord-Lieutenant that he should call upon all the commanding officers in his county to bring their battalions to Church? A Lord-Lieutenant of one county informed me that he would have to ask one of the commanding officers, a personal friend of his own, to march his men to Church in order to give thanks to the Almighty that his regiment was about to be disbanded by the Secretary of State. I hope the noble Earl will be able to assure us on the two points I have put to him.

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: It is difficult to follow exactly what the point was which my noble friend raised as regards the attestation form. Of course, if there is any danger of any misunderstanding arising as to the terms of the attestation form, it is desirable that the matter should be looked into and corrected. I think the noble Lord has touched a practical point in his Question—How is the selection to be made in the case of disbanded battalions of the Volunteers? Where there are one or more Volunteer battalions superfluous as battalions in a particular area under the new scheme of distribution it is proposed that the general officer commanding, acting in concert with the County Association, should decide on one of two alternatives, viz.:—(1) Whether all the existing units should be disbanded and an entirely new *cadre* raised, filling it to the necessary establishment from the officers and men of the disbanded units, or (2) whether all the units save one will be disbanded and the *cadre* of one retained and any gaps in its establishment made up from the individuals set free by the disbanding of the other battalions. But in either case every effort will be made to prevent the loss of the service of officers and men thus displaced. Every facility will be given them to transfer to other units, retaining their rank as far as possible. Should they not be disposed to accept transfer, the officers will be kept on a supernumerary list, to be absorbed in their county battalion when the opportunity occurs, and the men will be dealt with on similar lines, recruiting for the unit being closed until all those men whose names are registered have been absorbed.

THE TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT—THE MILITIA.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD rose to call attention to the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, and to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War—(1) If non-training bounty will be paid to men belonging to the disbanded Militia battalions; (2) If the special Infantry Reserve will be at once equipped in the same manner as the Regular Reserve; (3) If any additional officers will be added to the present establishment of officers serving with the Line in consequence of the posting of Line officers to the third special reserve battalions. The noble Duke said: My Lords, the Army Order of the 23rd December last is one of the most important Orders ever issued by the Army Council. It abolishes the Militia, and attempts to create a new Force which is to be known as the Special Contingent. That force is divided into combatants and non-combatants. The combatants comprise Engineers, Artillery, and Infantry. I propose to deal with the Infantry only, and to begin by reading Paragraph 2 of this Order.

> "Under Section 30 of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, a man who has not served in the Regular Forces may, under the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act of 1882, enlist into the Army Reserve. These men will in future be known as Special Reservists."

A Special Reservist of the Infantry, then, is a man who has never served with the colours of any regiment of the Line, and who under this Order will not even know to which regiment of the Line he may be drafted when the Reserves are called out. It is proposed to form this Special Infantry Reserve partly by direct enlistment, which began on the 15th January last, and partly by asking Militia officers and men now serving to transfer to the Special Reserve on the abolition of the Militia. One hundred and one Militia battalions are to train this year as Militia, and at the end of their training will be asked to transfer to the Special Reserve. Twenty-three battalions of Militia have been disbanded.

As regards the disbandment of twenty-three Militia battalions, last session it was the intention of the Government to reduce the number of Militia battalions by the amalgamation of weak battalions. There was then no question of disbandment; it was a case of the amalgamation of weak battalions. The Government promised that Part III of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill should not apply to the Militia until after next training, but made no mention then of their intention to disband twenty-three battalions, and then apply Part III of the Bill to them at once, before their annual training. The officers and men of the twenty three battalions marked out for disbandment are certainly at a disadvantage when compared with those of the battalions which are allowed to train, for these can discuss the conditions of the new service they will be asked to join, and they have the privilege of serving once more and for the last time in the history of this country as officers and men of the Militia.

The method of applying Part III of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act to the battalions of Militia which are to be disbanded before training is as follows. The Commanding Officers and Field Officers, who sacrificed their business, their professions and occupations in civil life, to serve at home and abroad during the late embodiment, are now no longer required. They are to disappear. The officers below Field rank are told that they must either transfer to the Reserve of officers, when they will be subsequently posted to Reserve battalions, or resign. The men have printed notices sent to them by post explaining that there are three courses open to them—first, to remain in the Militia till time expired, when, under this Order, they are not to be trained or to receive any pay or bounties, but are to be subject to embodiment; second, to take their discharge free; third, to transfer to the Reserve. In the last case they may train with any Militia battalion they like, not as Militiamen, but as Special Reservists. Subsequently, when all the Militia battalions have been abolished, and the Special Reserve battalions created, they will be posted to any Reserve battalion in which they wish to serve. They are told in the printed notice—

> "If you like to join the Special Reserve, your position is as follows. You will become a member of the Army Reserve, and, as a Special Reservist, you will be liable for service abroad in the time of emergency."

But not a word is said as to their liability for general drafting abroad. Of course, the man thinks he will serve abroad with the battalion which he decides to join. It does not seem to me that the men of these disbanded battalions have been fairly dealt with. The question which ought to have been put to them is, "Are you desirous of joining the Special Reserve, and are you willing to serve abroad with any battalion of the Line to which you may be drafted when the Reserves are called out?" That is a plain straightforward question, and it is what the Government mean, and it is also what the men would understand. I hope I may be informed why that question is not asked.

Another Army Order has just been issued saying that a man who decides to remain a Militiaman may receive non-training bounties up to this time next year provided he trains as a Militiaman this year, which is precisely what the men belonging to the disbanded battalions are not allowed to do. I hope the noble Earl the Under-Secretary of State for War will explain what is going to be done in their case. In the 101 battalions which are to train as Militia for the last time this year, all Militia officers will be required to transfer to the Special Reserve of Officers and to serve under the Army Act instead of under the Militia Act. The present Militia commanding officers will apparently, on transfer to the Reserve of Officers, be allowed to complete their tenure of command, but their position will be a very different one from what it is at present. In the first place, at the moment of transition a Militia commanding officer must advise his men to accept the liability to be drafted for general service abroad on the score of duty and patriotism. He must at the same time inform them that he himself can never by any possible chance take them abroad in person. He is to ask his men to train under his command in peace, and to hand them over to some one to take on service. That in itself is an intolerable position for a commanding officer.

The ex-Militia commanding officer will see his battalion for only twenty-one days in the year, because for the whole of the rest of the year it is to be commanded by a Line major at the depôt. Of course, all the Line officers, who are to be posted to a Special Reserve battalion, and the permanent staff, must look to the Line major as their real commanding officer. It will be on his reports that their advancement will depend. They can only look on the Militia commanding officer as a most awkward three weeks interruption. The Militia commanding officers will have nothing to say to the appointment of the Line major and officers, or of the adjutant, or of the permanent staff. If during the three weeks training the Militia commanding officer should report adversely on the Line officers, they would be sure to appeal from his report to those of their real commanding officer at the depôt. Here is a possibility of a long series of public inquiries into highly confidential reports, of which we have lately had a very interesting example. It is obvious that under those conditions the Militia commanding officer can have no real authority or influence over the Line officers and the adjutant and the permanent staff.

Paragraph 54 says—

> "Promotion may be up to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding."

But this is qualified by a note in the Appendix which says—

> "The Lieutenant-Colonel will be either from the Special Reserve of Officers or an Officer on the retired list."

I think that may be read to mean that in future the commanding officer of a Reserve battalion will always be an ex-Regular officer. By this Order a certain number of Line officers are to be posted to the Special Reserve battalions, and paragraph 65 of the Army Order reads—

> "For command and precedence the officers of the Special Reserve will be junior to the Regular officer of the same rank."

This is an attempt to combine two classes of officers in the same battalion, and grade one of those senior to the other. During the South African war senior captains in the Militia readily and freely volunteered to serve as subalterns in the Line. Militia captains cannot be reproached with having attached any undue importance to questions of rank when active service arose. But now the case is different. You are attempting to arrange new conditions of service in a novel force, and if the terms offered are exacting, uncongenial, and, above all, if they stamp the holder of the commission with the badge of inferiority, they will fail to attract.

Militia regimental officers up to the age of 35 will be required to transfer to the Special Reserve and to accept the liability for permanent service whenever ordered by the Army Council. They are not called up with the Reserves. On the contrary, they are always at the disposal of the Army Council for odd jobs, but except on mobilisation there will be no permanent appointments for them. They are to receive £20 a year, in consideration of which they are not allowed to resign their commissions until the expiration of the whole year for which they have received this retaining fee. This impossibility of resignation is a very serious liability, and one which no Regular officer is asked to accept. The Regular officer can at any moment during his service, except when mobilisation is imminent, resign his commission. Not so the Special Reserve officer, who, having taken £20, is bound for a whole year. For instance, if an officer of the Special Reserve has the chance of a good appointment or a good business opening abroad, he will not be able to accept it for a whole year, until he is free. The end of Paragraph 63 reads—

> "On notifying his intention not to renew this annual undertaking, the officer, if under thirty-five, will cease to belong to the Special Reserve, and will relinquish his appointment in his Reserve unit at the conclusion of his current period of liability. After attaining the age of thirty-five, an officer may continue to serve in Special Reserve in his Reserve unit, remaining liable for foreign service on emergency as before, but he will be at liberty to apply to resign his commission at any time, and will no longer be required to engage himself for a year in advance."

I cannot myself conceive any officer accepting such binding conditions of service. With regard to the chance of seeing active service, it is quite clear that the Special Reserve officer will see very little of that. It is manifest that his lot will be to take drafts of Special Reservists to foreign garrisons. That will be his use, because there is no other officer in the new scheme bound as he will be to perform that very necessary but very disagreeable duty.

Now, the officer of the Territorial Army, being confined by Act of Parliament to the United Kingdom, is consequently in a position to make his own terms for foreign service. Of course, the Territorial Army in the future will do just as the Volunteers did during the South African war. They will make their own conditions for foreign service, and quite naturally because they have only agreed to serve at home. They will insist on going straight to the front, and on coming home the moment the war is over. They will not commit themselves to service in foreign garrisons for indefinite periods. If a man compares for one moment the difference between the liabilities of the Special Reserve officer and those of the officer of the Territorial Army, and understands them, he will never do anything so foolish as to accept a commission in the Special Reserve. The prospects of promotion above the rank of captain are so remote for the Special Reserve officers that he need not consider them. He will never get beyond the rank of being junior to the junior captain in the Line regiment to which he is attached.

The number of officers to be posted to the Reserve battalions appears in the Appendix to the Order. The twenty-seven extra Reserve battalions are to have three Line captains, including the adjutant, and two Line subalterns, and seventy-four of the Special Reserve battalions are to have one Line major, four Line captains including the adjutant, and two Line subalterns. That means that in the case of seventy-four Militia battalions which are transferred to the Special Reserve, four Line captains are brought in over the heads of all Militia captains in those battalions. That will so completely change the battalions that the Militia captains will hardly care to transfer and undertake the binding liabilities and the inferior rank of the Special Reserve officer even for £20 a year.

Militia Regimental officers proved of great use during the South African war. Their services were employed for several years continuously both at home and abroad. They served in Egypt, in the Colonies, and in South Africa in many capacities. I am not aware that there were more failures among them than there were among officers belonging to other branches of the Service. His Majesty's Government, by this Army Order, destroy the whole class of Militia regimental officers by the simple process of requiring them to take conditions of service which it is impossible for them to accept. We know very well that the Government cannot find anything like sufficient officers for our military forces; yet they do not hesitate to wipe out a whole class of officers who certainly proved their value during the South African war and whom they have no chance of ever replacing. If you abolish the Militia form of military service, you must also abolish all those officers and men who can only give that particular form of service to their country. As a matter of fact, the reason why Militia officers have remained on in the Militia during the many years of uncertainty which have surrounded the future of that Force is their feeling of attachment to the regiments in which they have served for many years with their brother officers. But now, when they are asked to sit below the salt in their own mess, all the old comradeship of their life in their Militia regiment will have gone.

I know it is often said at the present moment of all Auxiliary Forces—Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers — that, of course, officers and men must be prepared to make sacrifices. I attach no importance to that opinion, for this reason. It is only the smallest fraction of any class in our whole community which take the trouble to give any form of military service to their country. The vast majority consider that they discharge the whole duty of patriotism by telling the miserable minority of their fellow-citizens, who do make considerable sacrifices of time, leisure, and money, in order to give military service to the State, that they ought to be ready to make further sacrifices. I am not an advocate of compulsory service, but I should like to see compulsory service smartly applied to these critics. They would be the better for it.

As regards men, the object of the Government is to induce Militiamen now serving, as well as recruits, to join the Special Reserve. In these circumstances it is only just that the conditions of this new service should be clearly explained to the men. With this object an Army poster appeared in January. How does this poster fulfil that elementary principle of justice? It says nothing as to the real nature of the service to be incurred by the men enlisting, because, although it tells them that they are liable for foreign service, it says nothing about the liability to be drafted to any Infantry regiment of the Line. It refers them for all such particulars to certain leaflets to be obtained at the Post Office, or from any recruiting officer. I have studied one of these leaflets. It is headed "Terms of Service," but that phrase is used in a restricted sense, being applied only to enlistment, because there is not a single line in the whole paper giving the man's liabilities for service after enlistment. The leaflet sets forth, in most attractive manner, the pay, bounties, and allowances, which the Government intend to shower on the Special Reservists, but is silent on the point of the duties which they mean to exact for the benefits they profess to confer. I am astonished to find that the statements made are in some cases incorrect, and in others misleading.

Under the heading "Pay," the recruit is informed that he gets 7s. a week. He is also informed, in large type on the front sheet, that he gets free food. A note, however, is added that 2s. a week is stopped for vegetables, groceries, and washing. But nothing whatever is said about what are known as consolidated stoppages, such as barrack damages and library, which are reserved as a pleasant surprise for the recruit after enlistment. In large type, on the front sheet, his attention is drawn to medical attendance, and he is informed that he will be admitted into hospital and receive "the necessary diet and surgical and medical treatment." Then, in a bracket, in the smallest type, come the words "See over," and on the back of the leaflet is this note—

> "The 3d. a day messing allowance is stopped, in addition to a stoppage of 7d. a day, if the Special Reservist is in hospital."

Suppose he breaks his leg playing football, he is stopped 10d. a day. He could not be charged any more, because that is practically the whole of his day's pay. The note continues—

> "If, however, he is admitted into the hospital suffering from injuries received during drill or manœuvre, he is granted free hospital treatment. If through injuries received in the performance of ordinary military duty, half stoppage, 3½d., only is enforced."

Yes, but at the same time his messing allowance of 3d. a day is stopped, so that he loses 6½d. out of his day's pay. So much for free medical attendance.

Paragraph 38 of the Army Order is copied on to the leaflet under the heading of "Bounties," and this statement is made—

> "At the conclusion of six months drill on enlistment, he may enlist in the Regular Army, even if he has not attained the age of eighteen years. After completing not less than three months drill on enlistment he may join the Regular Army if he has attained the age of eighteen years."

In either case he would be granted the bounty of £1 10s. 0d., and was thus in a position, not only to buy his discharge, but also to put half a sovereign into his pocket at the same time. Now the future recruit, enlisting into the Special Reserve, must pay £3 for his discharge. He gets £1 bounty at the end of each training, so that, instead of buying his discharge and having half a sovereign to spare, like the Militiaman, he must use the whole of his bounty and find £2 in addition. He receives £1 of non-training bounty three times a year. He must if he wishes to purchase his discharge before the training to save losing his situation, refund all non-training bounties, plus £3, making a total of £6. As he is sure to have spent all his non-training bounties he will not be able to do this. The Government have intentionally put it out of the power of the Special Reservist to purchase his discharge, but not a word of this appear in the leaflets or posters.

The object of the Government in destroying the Militia is to obtain in its place a body of men liable for service abroad with any regiment of the Line to which they may be drafted whenever the Reserves are called out. This liability is a very serious one, and one which many men would not, and could not, if it were made clear to them, and if they understood it, incur. Now there is not a single line in the whole of this Army Order mentioning in direct terms the liability of the Special Reservists for general drafting. Paragraph 54 of the Army Order reads—

> Special Reservists are liable on mobilisation for service abroad. A bonus of £2 will be given to serving Militiamen in consideration of the assumption of this liability. This bonus will be paid on attestation.

That tells a man nothing as to his real liability. The poster and the leaflets and the notices sent to the men of the disbanded regiments make no mention of general drafting. But somehow or other the men must be made liable for general drafting, and this is the process. The Army Council, having induced the man to offer himself for enlistment, bring two printed papers into play—the one, called the notice paper, marks the preliminary stage of the process; the other, called the attestation sheet, marks the final stage and completion. The notice paper is first handed to the lad. It is a highly technical document, containing on one side the general conditions of the contract of enlistment and on the other the questions which will be put to him verbally before he signs the attestation paper and takes the oath. He is supposed to read over and understand the notice paper. As a matter of fact he does neither, and is not capable of doing both. He does not read the notice, and if he did he would not understand it. But no doubt Paragraph 6 of the notice paper does contain these words—

> "You may be appointed to serve in any corps, or may be transferred or attached to any corps, requiring your services when called out on permanent services."

It will be observed that the word "drafted," which the man understands and knows, is not used. A vague expression is substituted.

Having received the notice, the man proceeds to make his attestation. Before doing so he is asked seventeen verbal questions. I should have expected that one of these questions would have been "Are you willing to be attested to serve in any Infantry regiment of the Line at home or abroad to which you may be drafted when called out on permanent service?" But no such question is asked. The conditions referred to in Paragraph 6 of the man's notice paper, which he is supposed to have read, are wholly ignored, and the question asked of the man is this, "Are you willing to be attested to serve in the 3rd Blankshire Regiment Special Reserve battalion?" This is exactly what the man wants to do and is willing to do, and so he answers "Yes." He signs the attestation and stands committed to the terms, to find later that he has really accepted the conditions of being drafted anywhere, which he dreads and abominates. The direct question is never put to him by word of mouth by the attesting officer. He is supposed to find it out himself by reading. Now so long as the Army Council refuse to ask the question fairly and squarely of the men, they must not object to the inference that by obscuring the true nature of the new enlistment they seek to prove themselves right and the Militia commanding officers wrong. As you are aware, the Militia commanding officers, when consulted, advised that the Militia could not be successfully enlisted for foreign service if the liability for general drafting was insisted upon, provided always that the real nature of the service required was explained to the men.

The abolition of the Militia and the attempt to create the Special Reserve must influence recruiting for the Regular Army. From the time of Mr. Pitt up to the present day, the Militia has always been the feeding force for the Army both in peace and war. At the end of this summer the Militia will be gone and for ever. The Army could never have got on without the Militia in the past, and the Government has not given us a single reason for believing that it will be able to do so in the future. Men now serving in the Militia will be offered £2 to transfer to the Special Reserve, but on transferring they will not be allowed to join the Army for one year. The result is obvious. The flow from the Militia to the Army will be checked for twelve months, because you are paying men, many of whom would have joined the Army for nothing, £2 a head to stay out of the Army for one year. The Government are willing to spend money in creating a shortage of recruits for the Regular Army for one year, in order to be able to point to a momentary success in filling up their Special Reserve.

Paragraph 38 of the Army Order allows the Special Reserve recruit to enlist into the Army at the end of six months preliminary drill, even if he has not attained the age of 18; and, to induce him to do so, he is to be given the same bounty which he would have received at the end of the current training—that is to say, the age for enlistment into the Army is reduced to 17 by means of the Special Reserve. A parent could claim his son out of the Army if he could show him to be less than 18. He will no longer be able to do so, as the Army Council will catch the boy through the Special Reserve at 17 without the consent of the parent. The Army Council mean in future to fish with a smaller meshed net in order to take undersized fish, which it was formerly illegal to capture. Moreover, this netting will be carried on in the waters of the waste products of our national industries, because recruiting for the Special Reserve is to be general, and not by counties, as it used to be for the Militia. That means that a man may be enlisted in the East end of London and sent to the depôt of the Devonshire Regiment and called a Devonshire Special Reservist. The Line will receive recruits from the Reserve battalion, but those recruits will have nothing to do with the county. The Militia Regulations prohibit enlisting a man for a county regiment if he has not lived in that county for one year. Men living in the county joined the County Militia and passed on into the Line Territorial Regiment. This most valuable link between the Line regiment and its county will now be severed, undoubtedly to the detriment of the Line, and especially so in Ireland. Another certain result will be that once these Regulations are understood, no man will ever enlist directly into the Regular Army, because by passing through the Special Reserve he will get a bounty of 50s. on joining the Line.

In an Army Memorandum issued about the Militia at the close of last session, it is stated that—

> "The establishment of Infantry Regiments in the Special Contingent will in future be equal and battalions are to have a chance of being used as units in war as well as of supplying drafts."

We know now that the establishment of a Special Reserve battalion is to be 539 privates of the Special Reserve. It is quite impossible for a Special Reserve battalion, with such an establishment, ever to go abroad as a battalion unit for the following reasons. We must deduct, first, the men leaving the Special Reserve on the outbreak of war and enlisting to serve with the colours; secondly, the men under twenty years of age, and too young for foreign service. These inevitable deductions, even without any drafting of Special Reservists to the Line—the only purpose for which they were enlisted—would leave one of the Special Reserve battalions about 200 strong for foreign service and without any Reserve. It is stated in paragraph twenty-three of the Army Order—

> "The Reserve battalions, other than the twenty-seven extra Reserve battalions mentioned in paragraph 18, will take over the immature and unfit from the Line battalions and provide trained drafts to replace casualties."

It is quite certain that the officer who can turn a raw recruit of seventeen into a mature reservist of twenty-seven, and the unfit into the sound, does not exist in real life, but only in the imagination of the authors of this scheme. You may go on adding immature boys and unsound men to a nucleus battalion, but you will not make it fit to provide trained drafts for foreign service. Paragraph 23 continues—

> "The establishment of Regular officers and non-commissioned officers in the Special Reserve battalion is fixed on a scale which will allow of their being used as training centres for the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Territorial Force. Thus they become in the fullest sense training battalions."

That conveys the impression that all the year round there will be a training battalion at the depot in the fullest sense. I fail to see how this can ever be the case. What you will really have is this—about 100 recruits of very tender years, split up into some ten squads, and no two men in each squad will have been in barracks the same number of days.

Drill on enlistment means that recruit No. 1 comes into barracks on the 1st November, and recruit No. 50 on the 1st January following, and the intervening numbers dribble into barracks by one's and two's at various intervals between the 1st November and 1st January. Then recruit No. 1 would have been in barracks two months longer than recruit No. 50, and hardly any half-dozen recruits would have been in barracks the same number of days. You will perceive that it is impossible to get these fifty men into one class for instruction. Common sense shows that military training cannot be done by squads of five or six with good results. It is bad for both the instructor and instructed. It is this collection of ragged squads which is described as a training battalion in the fullest sense of the term. It is utter nonsense in the fullest sense of the word.

Paragraph 9 of the Army Order reads as follows—

> "Taking Regular battalions at normal effective strength, the Regular Reservists will more than suffice to raise them to a war footing; consequently Special Reservists will be required only to make good the loss by wastage."

This is a handsome tribute to the success of the policy of the late Government of forming a fully adequate Reserve. At the end of the South African war the Reserve was depleted, and the satisfactory condition of the Reserve to-day mentioned in this paragraph is due entirely to the measures taken by Lord Middleton for replenishing the Reserve. The Army Order says that there is no need now for the Special Reserve boys to go abroad in the first instance. Unfortunately, the policy of the present Government is to allow this Reserve created by their predecessors to run out whilst destroying the means of filling it up. When this has happened you must incorporate the boys of the Special Reserve section with the battalion of the Expeditionary Force at once, provided there is any Special Reserve to incorporate, because it does not yet exist.

The number of officers taken from the colours by this Order to serve with the Reserve battalions totals up to 740. Is it the intention of the Government to add 740 officers at once to the Line establishment? I hope that such may be their intention. If it is not, then it is perfectly certain that the efficiency of the Line must be greatly impaired. According to this Army Order a Line regiment which has two Reserve battalions must supply these battalions with twelve officers. How can a Line battalion go on service with twelve officers short of establishment? I am well aware that there always have been Line officers employed at every depot, but I know very well that during the South African War every single Regular officer was taken away from his depot and sent to his regiment, and the places filled at the depot by anyone who had ever held a commission in any sort of force who was willing to come forward and do duty.

Then there is the question of equipment. Is it the intention at once to equip all Militiamen transferring to the Special Reserve in the same manner as the Regular Reserve? At present the Militia have the long rifle and bayonet, and carry their ammunition in pouches. The Line have the short rifle and bandolier; and there are many other differences in kit, clothing, and equipment. If the Special Reserve is to be any use as a Regular Reserve, you must give them the same equipment, and at once. But this means money.

What is the full and real value of this Special Infantry Reserve which this Order attempts to create? The establishment of a Reserve battalion is 539 privates, and there are to be 101 battalions. We may, therefore, say that in round numbers the Special Contingent Infantry is to number 54,000. But as enlistment is to begin at the age of seventeen and under, not more than one-third will be twenty years of age and available for foreign service. You must, then, allow 20 per cent. of that number for medical unfitness, and also allow for men joining the colours of the Army on the outbreak of war. Finally, we arrive at a force of less than 18,000. That is all that the Government aim at getting, a drafting pool of 18,000 indifferently trained men, without officers, excepting those who have been borrowed from the Line and who must be restored on mobilisation. The quantity seems very small, and the quality must be very indifferent.

As to the quality, I must anticipate an answer which I am likely to receive—namely, that the training prescribed for the Special Reserve has the approval of the Army Council, and that the whole scheme of this very short service Army is the outcome of long and careful consideration. The late Government proposed a short service Home Army in which the period of service was to be two years of battalion training with the colours. I learn from a pamphlet published by the late Secretary of State for War on the present Army scheme, that he at first suggested fifteen months for that short service Army, but that the Army Council insisted that nothing short of two years' continuous training could qualify a man to become a Reservist of the Regular Army. I read in an Army Memorandum issued by the present Secretary of State for War, dated 30th July, 1906, as follows—

> "The Cardwell system makes the training battalion serve two purposes. It provides drafts in peace, and the same battalion can, on mobilisation, by means of Reservists, be transformed into a first-class fighting unit. Where world-wide duties have to be performed battalions mobilised in this fashion appear to the great majority of the expert military advisers of the Government to be greatly preferable to the battalions of an independent

short service Army, composed largely of inexperienced and partially trained Reservists, who must necessarily be quite inferior to seasoned men who have already gone through a substantial period of service abroad."

That condemns, on the authority of the expert military advisers, the proposed short service Army of the late Government, on the score that two years is an adequate period for training. But now we have in 1907 an Army Order, issued by the same expert military advisers, for the purpose of creating a short service Army with six months of depot training and not any battalion training at all. It is said, with some truth, that if an expert witness says one thing, it is easy to produce an equally expert witness to prove the contrary. But here we have the same expert body perfectly ready to advise in two opposite directions. I suggest to the noble Earl that we agree to cancel the opinion of the Army Council on this point.

It is interesting to compare the cost of a man in the Regular Reserve with that of a boy in the Special Reserve. The Regular Reserve man represents the survival of the fittest, in that it is only a proportion of the recruits enlisted who reach the Reserve. In my own experience, out of twenty-five recruits I knew joining the Line, five only reached the Reserve. But the man who does reach the Reserve will be a man and a soldier. He will have seen the world, probably have been on active service, and will be perfectly familiar with all the incidents of a soldier's life. The very pick of the whole Army Reserve are called Section A. A Section A man of the Army Reserve is the finest type of a trained Infantry soldier. A Special Reserve boy will be what the Army Council means to make him — the sorriest travesty of a first Line soldier we have ever seen. On passing to the Reserve, the Section A men are paid one shilling a day for the first twelve months of their active service, and they can be called to the colours by order of the Army Council. These men cost £18 5s. 0d. a head per year. Now this Special Reserve seventeen year old boy in his first year will cost the country £15 in pay, and £4 2s. 6d. in food—total £19 2s. 6d. He will cost more than a Section A man of the Regular Reserve. He is of absolutely no military value at home, and cannot be sent abroad for three years on the point of immaturity.

I read in the Army Medical Report for the year 1906 that—

"The recruits passed into the Army in the year 1906 were on the whole very satisfactory. It must, however, be remembered that the greatest number were growing lads and not men. They should not be expected to do the work of mature soldiers for at least two years."

That refers to the recruits for the Army when they are enlisted at eighteen. They will in future, under this Order, be enlisted at seventeen, so we must say three years instead of two years. We must also remember that no continental nation commences to train a lad as a recruit until he is twenty, whereas we say that when he is twenty he is fit for the work of a mature soldier, which, as a matter of fact, he is not. In calculating the service value of the Special Reserve, I have allowed for the existence of the full establishment allowed by the Government, but, as a matter of fact, nothing approaching the number of 54,000 will ever exist in the Special Infantry Reserve. Say that you take over 30,000 men and boys from the disbanded Militia, at a cost of £2 a head. They will only be there for three or four years, and then you cannot replace them. The balance of transferred Militiamen will very soon melt away. There will be all those who would have joined the Army if they had not been given £2 apiece to stay out for a year. Obviously they will leave the Special Reserve and join the Army at the end of their first twelve months. Then there are others who have taken the £2 because they have only a year or little more to serve, and are prepared to run the risk for so short a time, but who always meant to be off as soon as they were free. The number of men with about fifteen months to serve in the Militia is about 20,000. Again, there is the waste (not in this case due to purchase, for that has been made impossible) which is always due to desertion, emigration, death, discharge on completion of service, and men becoming medically unfit. It is a case very similar to that of the Regular Reserve. The Government take over a balance of men which must vanish swiftly away in a few years, and which their policy prevents them from replacing.

The reason why it is not possible to maintain the Special Reserve as a substantive force is that every Special Reserve recruit must be pressed for the Army to avoid a disastrous shortage of recruits for the Line. To ensure sending on the Special Reserve recruit to the Army, the very high bounties which I have mentioned are offered. But if every Special Reserve recruit is converted, at a cost of 50s.—which is the sum mentioned in this Order—into a serving soldier in the Army, there is an end of the Special Reserve. A boy enlists into the Special Reserve because he is cold, hungry, and out of work. I will support that statement by an extract from the Army Medical Department Report of 1906, which says—

> "As quite 90 per cent. of the recruits are out of work when they enlist, and have, in many cases been underfed, it is only natural that their weight should be less than the normal for their size and age."

At the end of six months the lad has the chance of taking 50s. and joining the Army, or being turned out of barracks into the street, more hopelessly out of touch with work and employment than he has ever been in his life before. He must join the Army.

But there will be two classes who do not go on to the Army: first, those boys who never grow up to Line standard—they are physically unfit to serve with the colours, but are retained as first-class Army Reservists—and, secondly, those who have taken a dislike to soldiering during their preliminary drill, and who will lead a vagrant life for a short time, and then, on the pinch of hunger, just join some depot where they are not known, and do another six months drill. There will be a great deal of this fraudulent enlistment, because it will be both easy and safe, and most convenient for the vagrant class you are going to enlist. I do not see how with general enlistment the fraud can be detected. Those, then, are the two classes—namely, men who so cordially hate their experience of soldiering that they prefer the miseries of a vagrant life to service in the Army, and boys who never become physically fit to serve with the colours—of which the substance of the Special Reserve will be composed. In time of war these men are drafted to regiments they have never seen to uphold the glorious traditions of the British Infantry, traditions created by mutual confidence between all ranks, and, above all, by devotion to the regiment. But none of this can have any meaning for the Special Reservist. It is then in order to create a drafting pool of material of this description that the Militia system of military service has been destroyed.

The fact of the decision to abolish the existing Militia Force was not clearly apparent last Session, and therefore did not attract anything like so much attention or discussion as the means by which that abolition was to be accomplished. To my mind, it does not matter if the Militia is disbanded and asked to enlist in the Special Reserve, or is disbanded and asked to enlist in the new Territorial Force. But what does matter is that in both cases the Militia ceases to serve under the Militia Acts which have given that Force its distinctive character, with the result that the Militia, which has played such an important part in our military history, disappears, and that with it goes the foundation of our military system, to be replaced by what at present is but a paper scheme, still surrounded by mystery. After this summer the Regular Army will be deprived of the support of the only Force which can give it prompt and permanent expansion by organised units, and which has never failed so to do.

For instance, the South African war was declared in the second week of October, and before the end of November the 3rd Loyal North Lancashire Regiment embarked for Malta to liberate a Line regiment for service, going themselves on later to South Africa. This process proceeded rapidly till the whole Militia—Engineers, Artillery, and Infantry—were embodied, liberating units of the Regular Army. After this summer we shall have no Force in the country which can render similar service. It is true that the Army Council can change the name of the Volunteer Force to that of the Territorial Army, and may consider—I believe they do consider—that this is, in itself, an achievement well worthy of something in the nature of a national thanksgiving. But by changing the name they cannot change the nature of the civilian employment of the Volunteers. We know that during the South African war the Volunteers, when asked to give two months of embodied service, were unable to do so, and that consequently Royal

Reserve battalions were raised. We know, therefore, as a fact, borne of our past experience, that embodied service cannot be expected from the Volunteers, although their names be changed to Territorial Army. It is useless to say that the Territorial Army can assist the Regular Army by performing embodied service as the Militia has done, because recent experience has shown that they cannot do so.

The Regular Army and its Reserves have been greatly reduced. The ample Reserve created by the late Government is going to be allowed to run out and not to be adequately refilled. By reducing the age for enlistment for the Army to 17 by means of the Special Reserve door, the immaturity of the boys serving with the colours will be increased, and the *personnel* of the Army deteriorated. The abolition of the Militia deprives the Line of its chief source of recruits, and closes for ever that channel through which county recruits passed to the territorial regiments. The abolition of the Militia will confine a greater part of the Army, reduced as it is both in quality and quantity, to garrison duties in time of war. The effect, then, of this Order, which is the outcome of two years of talking, is to render the Regular Army an increasingly less efficient fighting machine for the defence of the Empire,

*VISCOUNT HARDINGE: My Lords, I wish to associate myself with everything that my noble friend the noble Duke has said with regard to the Militia, a branch of His Majesty's forces in which both of us have commanded battalions for over ten years. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that we are deeply interested as to the future of that force. At the same time I do not wish to traverse the ground which my noble friend has covered in such an able manner, as I think he has very clearly defined and indicated the present situation and feeling of that force. But, as I do not consider that the duties and the position of the Militia are very clearly defined by the Army Order of December 23rd, I wish to put to the noble Earl who represents the War Office in your Lordship's House a series of Questions of which I have given him private notice.

In the first place, I desire to ask, as regards seniority, how will the officers of the Special Reserve rank with the Line officers that are to be attached to each battalion? It would appear from the paragraph in the Order that all Line officers are to be senior to Militia officers. That would be monstrously unfair. In my battalion we have officers with, perhaps, ten years experience in the Army and five in the Militia. Over these men you will have some junior Line officer, and I venture to think this would not be a good way to induce seasoned officers to remain on in the Special Reserve. I hope, therefore, that there will be a change in some way in regard to this point. Secondly, I desire to ask whether during the non-training period the command of the battalion is to be, as at present, under the colonel, or under that of the senior attached Line officer? I should like, too, to know how these Special Reserve officers are to be called up to train both their units and their officers if that is the intention.

My third Question is: in the case of a disbanded battalion, what is to happen to the officers of that battalion? In Paragraph 72 it is stated that officers other than the lieutenant-colonel commanding, will be attached to the remaining Militia battalions, or will be transferred to other battalions if they wish. If that is allowed to take place in connection, for instance, with the South Wales Borderers, who have one of their battalions disbanded, they will have no fewer than fifteen captains and ten subalterns over strength. I should like to have some information as to how this will be adjusted. Next, on what basis are units selected as extra Reserve battalions? Fifthly, how is it proposed to procure subaltern officers for the special Reserve battalions, and what is to be the length of the recruits' training of those officers on joining?

Next, when will the conditions be published regarding the payment of the £40 grant to special Reserve officers on joining, and will they be retrospective? Is it to be understood that no man will be allowed to re-enlist in the special Reserve over the age of thirty? I trust some means will be devised to secure the services of those men. And, lastly, could authority be obtained to allow an extra meat ration to be given to weakly recruits on joining on the recommendation of the medical officer? This is a reasonable suggestion to make considering that horses when first taken on for the Army are allowed an extra forage if they are considered weakly. I do not see why the same consideration should not be permitted to weakly recruits. I trust, therefore, that the noble Earl, when he has answered the Questions on the Paper put by the noble Duke——

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: And which the noble Duke has never put.

*VISCOUNT HARDINGE: Well, the Questions that appear on the Paper. I trust that after the noble Earl has answered those Questions, he will enlighten me on the points in regard to which I have put these Questions, and alleviate the great uncertainty which at present prevails as to what is to happen in the special Reserve—an uncertainty which must be greatly detrimental to a new force coming into being, which force I feel sure all Militia officers, although not in unanimous agreement with those new proposals or changes, will loyally support to the best of their ability.

*LORD RAGLAN: My Lords, the noble Lords who have just spoken have alluded at some length to the infantry of the Special Service section. The points that I desire to bring to the notice of the noble Earl the Under-Secretary are connected with the other arms of the Special Service section. In old days the Militia consisted of five branches—infantry, field artillery, garrison artillery, engineers, and medical staff. Last year or the year before a large portion of the engineer branch—namely, the submarine miners—were abolished. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe referred to the danger of suddenly sending to the right-about men who had given you good service, and I can give a very good instance of this in connection with the submarine miners. For a great number of years the regiment which I have the honour to command has obtained seventy or eighty recruits annually from Swansea. This year we got nine. I asked my recruiting sergeants the reason, and they replied that it was all the result of disbanding the submarine miners, who were walking about saying that they had been abominably treated. My noble friend Lord Cawdor could give a similar instance in regard to the Carmarthenshire Artillery, which only got sixteen recruits last year. So that by turning men off at a moment's notice, you not only lose the services of those men, but deprive the country of the services of others, who are disgusted with that treatment. I understand that the Medical Staff Corps is also to be abolished. Of this branch I have not much knowledge, but in both instances there is the serious mistake of dismissing men whose trained services are most valuable.

With regard to the Artillery, it is difficult to say anything, because nothing whatever has been allowed to leak out of the War Office as to what are to be their conditions of service, how the men are to be trained, and what the units, if any, that are to be formed are to do. The only thing, apparently, that has been laid down is this. The Army Council, having begun by saying cheerfully that it is possible to make a most excellent infantryman by six months recruit's drill, and twenty-one days annual training, now go one better, and say we can make Field Artillery with six months recruit's drill and fifteen days annual training. I do not suppose that anybody outside Bedlam ever imagined that it was possible to make Field Artillery with that training, and the only conclusion I can come to with regard to the Artillery, is that it will never really be trained at all. They will be drafted to the Regular Artillery and will be used to extend ammunition columns and so forth, but as units they will never be trained at all. When we remember that even the Garrison Artillery have been for years clamouring to be allowed more than one month's training in the year, because it was impossible for them to learn in the course of a month what they should know, is it not the sheerest folly to say that in fifteen days you can teach Field Artillery anything worth knowing?

Then I come to the arm of the Service to which I have the honour to belong—namely, the Engineers. There is no arm of the service in which the individual man is so important as the Engineers, and no service in which it is more important that those in charge of a working party should know the qualifications and trades of the men going out with them. But according to the proposals laid down in the new Army Order, there will be only fifteen days training. This, too, will leave absolutely no time for musketry. There always has been a school of soldiers who have been exceedingly anxious that Engineers should not shoot. Why, heaven only knows! I believe that in South Africa the Engineers fired more rounds than any other arm in the service. There is a still more serious point with regard to the Militia Engineers. They are in a different position from the rest of the Special Service section. The Militia Engineers are to be organised in siege companies and in railway companies, and those companies, on the outbreak of war, are to go abroad in their own unit—that is to say, they are to be utilised abroad under their own officers and non-commissioned officers as companies to carry out this work. I venture to think that the idea that a force can be sent straight from this country to the seat of war, of which force the officers and men have only seen each other for a fortnight in the year, is absolutely preposterous. The remarkable part is that there will be a worse training than before at a greater cost. For many years the British Army has struggled against what used to be called in old days adjutants' regiments. One of the great prides of the modern War Office was that it had abolished adjutants' regiments. But it is now insisted that the whole of these special regiments shall be adjutants' regiments and nothing else. The company officers will have no knowledge of their men, they will hardly ever see them, and the entire leading of the men must inevitably fall into the hands of the permanent staff.

There is one other important point with regard to the Engineers. Those of us who have served in that arm have been struggling for many years to improve the class of men recruited; and, if I may be allowed to say so, it would not be an easy matter to find a finer body of men, physically and intellectually, than I have the honour to command. A great many of them have good trades, almost all of them earn high wages, and they are men of exceptionally fine physique. I have the gravest doubt of men of that particular class coming out for six months training. They would come out for three months as they do now—nine weeks recruits' drill and seven weeks training. I have no difficulty in getting them for that period, because they come out in the summer when the coal trade is slack and when the iron workers and tinplate workers are glad to get away from the heat of the furnaces; but I doubt whether they could be induced to leave their well-paid work for six months. I am afraid the result will be that you will fall back on the loafers and corner boys whom we have all struggled for many years, with a great amount of success, to eliminate from the Militia.

As to the Orders and Regulations generally, I hold that they are not made with sufficient allowance for the feelings of the men. It is only by careful attention to the feelings of individual men and the study of the particular sentiment of these individuals that they can be held for service in a Volunteer Army. These orders are all drawn up by people who have no knowledge of men. They do not know the feelings of the men. It is from such want of knowledge that impracticable proposals are brought forward, the failure of which is afterwards attributed to the commanding officers.

*EARL BATHURST: My Lords, the noble Duke has already referred to the disbanded battalions of Militia, and I should like, with the indulgence of your Lordships, to say a word or two on their behalf before it is too late. When last session, in the debate on the Territorial Army Bill, my noble friend made the speech which was held by the country as saving the Militia, it was the general impression, I believe, of the whole House, that only those battalions which were weak and inefficient were to be disbanded. But when the Army Order came out the other day you may judge of my surprise on finding that the battalion I have the honour to command was among the battalions to be disbanded. I asked myself the reason. Was it on account of numbers? I was quite sure it could not be that, because my battalion is stronger than a great many other battalions in the country. Then I asked myself, could it be on account of efficiency? It could not be on that ground, for I have letters from Sir Ian Hamilton, under whose own eyes my battalion has been trained for the last two years, in which he refers to the battalion as an exceptionally good one and one of the best in that part of the country—I presume he means in the Southern Command.

On looking down the list I find also the name of the 3rd Battalion Oxford Light Infantry. In 1906 that battalion was among the battalions of the Militia brigade which I had the honour to command on Salisbury Plain; and last year I commanded another Militia brigade which included the 4th battalion of that regiment. I hope I shall not hurt the feelings of any officers of the 4th battalion if I say that I considered the 3rd Battalion much superior. It was also a stronger battalion. I and others naturally do not wish to be classed with those who have failed to keep their battalions efficient, and I trust the noble Earl will correct an impression which prevails throughout the country that it is only the weak and inefficient battalions which are being disbanded. I will quote to your Lordships the sort of thing that is appearing in the Press. In one paper the other day I read this statement—

> "All of us must regret sincerely that it has been found necessary to disband any of our old Militia battalions, but inasmuch as those battalions could not maintain their establishment it is useless continuing with them."

In another appeared this statement—

> "The reduction was not decided on until after prolonged and careful consideration, but in most, if not in all, cases ample warning had been given that their existence could not be continued unless they were in a position to maintain themselves at the same establishment as other battalions, and this they failed to do."

The Secretary of State was asked in another place the other day on what ground my battalion, the 4th Gloucester, had been ordered to be disbanded and the 3rd Battalion maintained, when, according to the Return, there were wanting 443 men to complete the establishment of the 3rd Battalion and only 118 to complete that of the 4th. The Secretary of State replied—

> "The question of the retention of Militia battalions was considered on the ground of their suitability to fulfil the administrative conditions which will be in future required of the majority of the Special Reserve battalions. The 3rd Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment being at the depôt was accordingly maintained."

The outside public does not understand what that means. That means that those battalions have been selected for disbandment which had separate depôts. It is simply on account of the expense which these depôts have entailed that good battalions are being disbanded. Will the noble Earl, in justice to these disbanded battalions, make a clear statement to the effect that it is not through any fault of their own that they have been selected?

I cannot understand why the Secretary of State has not had the pluck to say this straight out in another place, but I hope the Under-Secretary will be able to make a better show. I hope something will be done to soothe the wounded feelings from which the officers of some of the disbanded battalions are suffering. This could be accomplished by the issue, before the battalions are disbanded, of an Order thanking the officers and men for their past services to the country. Such a graceful act would be appreciated by the country, and as it would not cost anything, the War Office cannot complain that it would serve to swell the Army Estimates.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, the course which this debate has taken illustrates a difficulty which sometimes arises owing to the form in which notices are placed on the Paper of your Lordships' House. The noble Duke placed a notice on the Paper to call attention to the Army Order of 23rd December, and he also announced his intention of asking certain Questions. Unfortunately I was not in the House during the whole time the noble Duke was addressing your Lordships so I cannot speak from personal knowledge; but my noble friend behind me tells me he did not put the Questions. However, he did call attention to the Army Order; but he also called attention to a great number of other matters. The noble Duke was followed by Viscount Hardinge, who asked a number of Questions of which he had given private notice. Then Lord Raglan followed upon an entirely different subject, on which he, like the noble Duke and the noble Viscount, spoke with great authority; and now we have had a speech from the noble Earl Lord Bathurst, also dealing with somewhat intricate details. In those circumstances I would venture to suggest that it would be to the advantage of the debate if it were adjourned, in order to give my noble friend behind me time to reply to the very intricate and detailed Questions which noble Lords opposite have, well within their right, raised. In a debate of this kind it is, of course, not the object of noble Lords opposite to gain a dialectical advantage. What they want are Answers to the Questions. My noble friend would be perfectly ready to reply now, but it is obvious he could do so to much greater advantage if he were given time to consider the matters which have been raised, more especially as certain questions have been asked to which he, clearly, not being the Minister at the head of the War Office, could not give answers on his own authority. In those circumstances I would venture to suggest that if some noble Lord would move the adjournment of the debate till Thursday it would be to the advantage of this very interesting discussion. Lord Newton has a notice on the Paper for Thursday, but I understand that it is not likely to lead to much discussion. Therefore I suggest Thursday as a convenient day for resuming the debate.

LORD NEWTON: I have taken my notice off, at the request of the Government, and have placed it down for Tuesday next.

EARL CAWDOR: My Lords, there can be no objection on the part of any noble Lord on this side of the House to the course proposed by the noble Earl. We are anxious that we should have the fullest possible replies to our Questions. We do not deny for a moment that the noble Earl is quite within his right in asking for a little time to consider these Questions, and we hope that the result will be that we shall have fuller information on the subject than we have had hitherto.

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned to Thursday next."

On Question, Motion agreed to, and adjourned accordingly.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS BILL, [H.L.].

A Bill to provide for the registration and regulation of moveable dwellings and for the enforcement of school attendance by children inhabiting such dwellings. Was presented by the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 19.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 18th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

New Writ for the County of Carmarthen (Western Division), in the room of John Lloyd Morgan, esquire, K.C. (Recorder of the Borough of Swansea).—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Macclesfield and District Tramways (Abandonment) Bill. Read a second time, and committed.

Holderness Water Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Divorce Bills.—Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, the Lord Advocate, Mr. Attorney-General, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. Cave, Sir David Brynmor Jones, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, and Mr. Solicitor-General were nominated members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PETITIONS.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Barton-on-Humber; Blaenavon; Bowes Park;

Cheetham; Children's Protection League; Cullercoats; Devonport; Leeds (two); Martock and Ash; Middlewich; Newcastle-upon-Tyne; New Holland; North Shields; Northwich; Penzance (two); Richmond; Tynemouth; West Bromwich; and Winsford; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Ashington; Bedford; Birkenhead (five); Carrington; Deal; Dulverton; East and Mid Surrey; Goldsithney; Halifax; Hyson Green; Hyde; Lambeth; Leeds; (two); Oxford; Percy Main; Priestman; Ringwood (two); Rotherhithe; St. Hilary; Sileby; South Durham; South Lambeth; Smethwick; Timsbury; West Bromwich (two); and Winchester (two); to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Dundee; and Marple; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES (ENTERIC FEVER AT BRENTRY).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by R. W. Braithwaite, esquire, M.D., D.P.H., His Majesty's Inspector under the Inebriates Acts, concerning an outbreak of Enteric Fever at Brentry Certified Inebriate Reformatory [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVAL WORKS ACTS, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1903, and 1905.

Account presented, showing the amount of Money issued out of the Consolidated Fund; the mode in which it was provided; the amount and nature of the Securities created in respect thereof; the amount of the surplus of Income above Expenditure for the financial year ended 31st March, 1896, and the amount of money expended in pursuance of the Acts during the year ended the 31st March, 1907; together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 63.]

NATIONAL DEBT (MILITARY SAVINGS BANKS).

Account presented, of the Gross Amount of all Moneys received and paid by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt on account of the Fund for Military Savings Banks, from 19th September, 1845, to the 5th January, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 64.]

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts of the University of Aberdeen for the year ending 30th September, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 65.]

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of a Light Railway in the county of Flint from Dyserth to Newmarket (London and North Western Railway (Dyserth and Newmarket Light Railway) Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of Light Railways in the county of Salop from Stottesdon to Billingsley (Stottesdon, Kinlet, and Billingsley Light Railway Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of a Light Railway in the parish and rural district of Catherington, in the county of Southampton, in extension of the Light Railway authorised by the Portsdown and Horndean Light Railway Order, 1898, and for other purposes (Portsdown and Horndean Light Railway (Extension, etc.) Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRICES OF EXPORTED COAL.

Return ordered, "giving the quantities of Coal Exported from each of the ports of the United Kingdom, by quarterly periods, in 1906, at prices not exceeding 5s., above 5s. but not exceeding 6s., above 6s. but not exceeding 7s., and so on (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 90, of session 1907)."—(*Mr. David Alfred Thomas.*)

COAL EXPORTS, &c.

Return ordered, "giving for the year 1907 the Export of Coal from each port in the United Kingdom to each country abroad, together with summary statements showing the export of Coal in every period of three months from the principal districts of the United Kingdom to the principal groups of foreign countries; and also showing the quantity shipped at each port in the United Kingdom for ships' use on foreign voyages during the like period (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 94, of session 1906)."—(*Mr. David Alfred Thomas.*)

BRITISH MUSEUM.

Account ordered, "of the Income and Expenditure of the British Museum (Special Trust Funds) for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1908; and Return of the number of persons admitted to visit the Museum and the British Museum (Natural History) in each year from 1902 to 1907, both years inclusive; together with a statement of the progress made in the arrangement and description of the collections, and an account of objects added to them in the year 1907."—(*Mr. Trevelyan.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Seamen's Waiting Room at Belfast.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that in every British shipping port of importance there is a seamen's waiting room, who await discharge or engagement in a vessel; and whether seeing that at the Mercantile Marine Office at Belfast no such waiting room exists, he will make inquiries into the matter with the view of having one established.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) A waiting room for seamen is attached to the Mercantile Marine Office at most of the larger ports. There is some difficulty in providing a room in the Belfast Office in a convenient position, but I am in communication on the subject with the Irish Board of Works, who are in control of the building.

School Teachers' Superannuation Fund.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): To ask the President of the Board of Education what was the total number of male and female teachers respectively paying into the Teachers' Superannuation Fund on 31st March. 1907; what was the total amount paid by the teachers in the year ending 31st March, 1907, and the total amount for the seven years ending 31st March, 1907; what was the total sum paid to the teachers in the year ending 31st March, 1907, and when the promised revision of the scale of such payments will be made known to teachers; and whether he can yet state what alterations will be made in the amount of superannuation payments to be paid in future to the teachers.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I have no figures giving the number of teachers contributing to the Deferred Annuity Fund on a given date. The number of certificated teachers in employment on the last day of the school year ending between 1st August, 1905, and 31st July, 1906, was 29,414 men and 54,860 women. To ascertain the number contributing to the fund it would be necessary to deduct those who did not accept the Elementary School Teachers (Superannuation) Act, 1898, and to add a number of teachers who were contributing in respect of an interval in their service under Rule 13 of the Elementary School Teachers' Superannuation Rules, 1899, and certain others who are serving in pupil-teacher centres and other institutions in which service may be recorded. The total amount received from the teachers in the year ending 31st March, 1907, was £199,966; the total amount for the seven years ending 31st March, 1907, was £1,105,500. The total amount paid to the teachers during that year was £988. I am not aware that any promise of a revised scale of payments either by or to the teachers has been made. The actuarial inquiry required by the Act has taken place, and the Report has recently been laid before Parliament. Section 4 (2) of the Act provides that: "If it appears from any actuarial report under this Act that the assets and liabilities of either account of the fund are such as either to require a reduction or to justify an increase of the annuities, the Treasury may cause fresh tables to be constructed and those tables, when approved by the Treasury, shall come into force, and shall be laid before Parliament, and the former tables shall cease to be in force, and so on from time to time as occasion requires."

Workmen's Insurance in Germany.

MR. L. HASLAM (Monmouth Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will grant the Return relating to Workmen's Insurance (Germany) on to-day's Notice Paper.*

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Yes, Sir.

Local District Boards in the Bombay Presidency.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for India if he can give the number of local district boards in the Bombay Presidency and their names; the number of members on each board, distinguishing between officials nominated and elected; the area in square miles of the jurisdiction of each board; and the amount of money placed at the disposal of each board for each year during the last five years for which figures are obtainable.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I shall be happy to send my hon. friend the Annual Reports for the five years ending 1905–6, published by the Government of Bombay, on the working of district boards in the Presidency, which give for each district and sub-district board the information he desires. I append a summary of the figures for the Presidency as a whole.

Number of District and Sub-District Boards.	Number of Members.		Area in square miles under Board's jurisdiction.
	Officials.	Non-officials.	
231	624	2,247	101,691
	Nominated. 1,584†	Elected. 1,287	

† Includes 27 *ex-officio* members.

Income from all sources.

1901–2.	1902–3.	1903–4.	1904–5.	1905–6.
£ 295,923	£ 326,463	£ 320,010	£ 292,286	£ 379,006

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* Return showing, in terms of English money, the latest available annual statement with reference to Workmen's Insurance in the German Empire against (1) sickness, and (2) invalidity and old age; giving in each of the above classes of insurance (1) the number of persons insured, (2) the number compensated, (3) receipts from all sources, (4) contributions from employers, contributions from employees, contributions from the State, (5) amount of expenses incurred, (6) amount of accumulated funds, and (7) average compensation per case.

Foreigners holding Public-House Licences in the United Kingdom.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of foreigners who hold public-house licences in England and Wales, in Scotland, and in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) There is no information in my Department or, as I learn, in the Scottish and Irish Offices, enabling me to answer this Question accurately. I am not aware of any statistics bearing more nearly, in point of date and otherwise, on the Question put to me than those which are to be found in the Occupation and Nationality Tables of the Census Reports. Foreigners, to the number of 638, are shown as engaged in England and Wales in the year 1901 in occupations broadly classified as "Inn, Hotel-keepers: Publicans, Beersellers, and Cider Dealers" (Cd. 1523, pp. 280–1) in Scotland twenty-nine foreigners are shown under the heading "Inn, Hotel-keepers: Publicans, Wine and Spirit Merchants" (Cd. 1798, p. 771). The precise meaning of "foreigner" in these Reports depends on the rules set out in the Reports as having been adopted for the purpose of classification. In the Census Reports for Ireland (where occupations in which not more than forty foreigners were engaged are not shown separately) there is no entry of foreigners under a heading similar to the foregoing. I am informed that it has been ascertained that there are three foreigners holding public-house licences in the Dublin Metropolitan Police district.

Compulsory Attendance at Evening Schools.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he received a request from the West Riding Local Education Authority last September to appoint a Departmental Committee to inquire into the feasibility and advisability of making attendance at evening schools compulsory; and whether he can see his way to accede to this request.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I have received the request to which my hon. friend alludes. The matter was some time ago referred by the Board to the Consultative Committee, who have already been giving very careful consideration to it, with a view to submitting a Report to the Board.

Overtime in Statistical Office, Customs.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what was the average amount of overtime done in the Statistical Office of the Customs in the years 1906 and 1907. and whether there is any hope of the present excessive amount of extra duty being reduced, as indicated in reply to a Question last session.

Answered by Mr. Runciman.) I am informed that the average amount of overtime work performed in the Statistical Office of the Customs in the years 1906 and 1907 was 300 hours and 303 hours per head respectively. My reply of 20th August last to the hon. Baronet the Member for Wandsworth, to which I suppose the hon. Member refers, that every effort is made to reduce the amount of this extra attendance, still holds good of course, but I am afraid I can hold out no hope of any material reduction below the figures quoted.

Promotion in the Statistical Office, Customs.

MR. O'DOWD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, in view of the fact that some eighty new class assistant clerks in the Statistical Office of the Customs are eligible by service for promotion, will he arrange for a proportion of the vacancies at the forthcoming examination for port clerkships to be given to meritorious men in the Statistical Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman*). The course suggested by the hon. Member has in fact been taken. Four assistant clerks in the Statistical Office have been nominated by the Treasury for appointment to port clerkships, which in ordinary course would have been offered for competition at the forthcoming examination.

Purchase of the Inverliever Estate.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what is the approximate area of the Inverliever estate, purchased recently by the Government with a view to afforestation; what was the price paid for it; and what was taken as its annual value for rating at the time of the purchase.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The approximate area of the estate is 12,530 acres, and the price paid for it was £25,000. Its annual value for rating is understood to be £1,137.

Elementary Education Loans.

MR. A. G. C. HARVEY (Rochdale): To ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state the amount of loans raised for purposes of elementary education by education authorities in England and Wales, and the payments made in respect of loan charges, principal and interest, in each year from 1901–1 to 1906–7.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*)—

	Period.	Loans raised.	Loan charges (Principal and Interest).
		£	£
School Boards	Year ended 29 Sept. 1901	2,244,988	1,881,088
„ „	„ „ 1902	2,283,705	2,022,306
„ „	„ „ 1903, or where appointed day under Part III. was earlier than 30 Sept. 1903, from 30 Sept. 1902 to appointed day	2,745,645	1,878,987
„ „	Periods commencing 30 Sept. 1902 and ending with appointed day	852,442	590,714
Local Education Authorities	Year ended 31 March 1904, or where appointed day was later than 1 April 1903, from appointed day to 31 March 1904	662,978	939,931
„ „	Year ended 31 March 1905, or where appointed day was later than 1 April 1904, from appointed day to 31 March 1905	1,721,958	2,210,964
„ „	Year ended 31 March 1906	2,134,370	2,352,697

Tariff on American and other Goods entering the Philippines.

MR. BONAR LAW: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether, after April, 1909, all American goods are to be admitted free of duty to the Philippines, while existing duties are to be retained on goods imported from all other countries countries.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am not aware that any decision has been arrived at, but inquiries are being made.

Suggested Grant to Mr. D. A. M'Laughlin, Mate of the "Dundonald."

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been directed to the circumstances following the total loss of the British ship "Dundonald," in the course of her return voyage from Sydney to Falmouth, on Desolation Island, one of the Auckland group, about 180 miles south of New Zealand, in March of last year; to the manner in which the survivors succeeded in maintaining themselves under circumstances of almost unprecedented difficulty throughout the southern winter and in constructing a primitive craft and so reaching another island of the group, from which they were afterwards rescued; how the safety of the party was largely due to the capable leadership, for a period of more than six months, of the second mate, Mr. Daniel Aloysius M'Laughlin, of Old Kilpatrick, Dumbartonshire, whose conduct was worthy of the best traditions of the merchant service; and whether he can see his way to making any award to Mr. M'Laughlin in recognition of that conduct.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Yes, Sir, my attention has been called to the loss of the British ship "Dundonald," and to the services rendered by Mr. D. A. M'Laughlin. The case has been carefully considered by the Board of Trade, and, while highly appreciating the praiseworthy manner in which Mr. M'Laughlin performed a difficult duty imposed upon him in exceptional circumstances, they regret that the case is not one in which they can grant any reward.

Hop-Growing Industry in Western American.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he will instruct His Majesty's consuls at Portland, Oregon, and other places on the Pacific Coast, to keep him informed as the progress and action of the Pacific coast hop-growers' syndicate.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether Chinese and negro labour is employed in the cultivation of hops on the Pacific Coast of America; and how the wages of such Chinese and negro labourers respectively compare with those paid to hop pickers and others employed in the industry in this country.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) His Majesty's consuls have been instructed to supply some information with regard to these matters.

Imports of American Hops.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, what proportion of the hops consumed in Great Britain have been imported from the United States of America during each of the last thirty years.

(*Sir Edward Strachey.*) No official statistics of the production of hops were collected prior to 1885. The proportions borne by the imports from the United States to our total supply from that year inclusive are as follows—

Year.	Per cent.
1885	14·01
1886	3·94
1887	6·32
1888	18·48
1889	11·42
1890	16·00
1891	12·89
1892	13·70
1893	23·61
1894	13·63
1895	20·20
1896	20·99
1897	15·17
1898	32·99
1899	15·17
1900	27·92
1901	9·92
1902	16·56
1903	13·78
1904	25·63
1905	4·61
1906	26·98
1907	23·56

Grubbing of Hops.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, how many acres of hops in this country have been grubbed during each of the last thirty years; and whether grubbing is increasing or decreasing during the present winter.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) We are unable to say to what extent grubbing has taken place during the last thirty years, inasmuch as our Returns only give the net loss or gain, and do not show the acreage of new plantations. The total area under hops in 1907 was 26,851 acres less than in 1878.

Hop Picking Seasons—Persons Employed.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade what is the total number, and the number per acre of persons employed permanently and during the picking season respectively, in the English hop industries.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is not possible to state separately the numbers permanently engaged in the hop industry, but some estimates of the additional numbers engaged during the picking season will be found in a Report by Dr. Reginald Farrar to the Local Government Board, of which I sent the hon. Member a copy.

Protection of British Hop Industry.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether pending the Report of the Select Committee on the Hop Industry, he will take steps temporarily to safeguard British hop-growers against the action of the Pacific Coast syndicate.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) As I have already informed the hon. Member, I have not yet heard whether such a syndicate as that to which he refers has been actually formed. I cannot recommend that any action should be taken in the matter.

Supply of Electricity Bill.

MR. ASHTON (Bedfordshire, Luton): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is his intention to reintroduce this session the Supply of Electricity Bill of the session of 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I hope to introduce a Bill amending the Electric Lighting Acts as soon as there seems to be a reasonable prospect of time being available for its discussion.

Metropolitan Boroughs adopting the Notification of Births Act.

MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, how many metropolitan boroughs have decided to adopt the Notification of Births Act; and whether any, and if so which metropolitan boroughs have decided not to adopt this Act.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The Act has been adopted in the City of London and in sixteen out of the twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs. I have received information to the effect that it is proposed to adopt it in another of these boroughs. The only metropolitan borough in which, so far as I am aware, the council have expressed a view adverse to the adoption of the Act is the borough of Deptford.

Milk-Blended Butter.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he will state the nineteen names under which milk-blended butter is sold, in accordance with The Butter and Margarine Act, 1907, with the approval of the Board of Agriculture.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The names which have been approved by the Board for use in connection with milk-blended butter are Consumo, Casora, Casmon, Casova, Casana, Casoa, Casa, Iveldale, Iveldene, Iveleat, Ivelene, Ivelette, Ivelike, Ivelmene, Ivelmore, Mayblossom, Pearks' Breadmate, Pearks' Bredspred, and Pearksown. We do not know how many of them are actually in use.

Building Loans in Ireland.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say what is the procedure to be adopted by a tenant farmer in Ireland to acquire a loan from the Board of Works for the purpose of building a dwelling-house on his land; at what rate per cent. is the money repayable; and under what Act of Parliament has the Board power to advance money for the purpose.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The procedure is for the farmer to write to the Secretary of the Board stating that he desires to obtain a loan, when full directions will be sent him. Loans are repayable in twenty-two years at a rent-charge of £6 10s. per cent., which includes interest at £3 8s. 3d. per cent. The Acts of Parliament under which loans of this class are made are 10 Vict., c. 32, and 44 and 45 Vict., c. 49. I will send the hon. Member a pamphlet giving further details.

Sale of Clonrellick Farm, County Westmeath.

SIR WALTER NUGENT (Westmeath, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a portion of the farm known as Clonrellick, formerly held by Mary J. Little, near Moate, county Westmeath, but now sold to the Estates Commissioners, has been sold to a man who already holds 200 acres of land in the neighbourhood; and, if so, whether in view of the provisions of the Act which was passed for the relief of congestion in Ireland, he will say what action he proposes to take.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the lands referred to in the Question have not been sold to them, but are included in an estate which the owners have agreed to sell direct to the tenants, and in respect of which advances have been applied for. When the estate comes to be dealt with by the Commissioners in order of priority they will carefully consider the nature of the tenancies and the advances applied for.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Miss Margaret Clarke.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Miss Margaret Clarke of Posserstown, Nobber, in the County of Meath, has applied to the Estates Commissioners to be reinstated on a farm from which she was evicted on the estate of Mr. Smyth, situate in the electoral division of Carricklick; whether her case has been dealt with, and if so, what is the result.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners assume that the Question refers to an application for reinstatement which they have received from Miss Margaret Clarke, who alleges that she was evicted from a holding on the estate of Mrs. Penelope Filgate. The application, which is dated July, 1907, has not yet been inquired into.

Delay in Erection of Labourers Cottages in Navan.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in appointing an arbitrator to deal with the scheme for the erection of labourers cottages in Navan rural district; and whether, seeing that in order to secure to the labourers to whom plots have been allotted the ensuing season's crop it is necessary that the plots should be immediately fenced, he will urge the Local Government Board to avoid unnecessary delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The application for the appointment of the arbitrator was received by the Local Government Board towards the end of last month. The necessary order of appointment is in course of preparation, and it is expected that it will be signed in a day or two.

Case of James Gore on the Balfour Estate at Rathkenny.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have agreed to purchase the estate of R. B. Balfour, situate at Rathkenny, Slane, county Meath; whether James Gore has applied to be reinstated on the farm on this estate from which he was evicted, and if it is intended to give him the whole of his former holding; and, if not, will he say why it is not to be done.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners have been in negotiation with Mr. R. B. Balfour for the purchase of the farm referred to in the Question, and the owner has intimated that he is prepared to accept their price. James Gore has applied to be reinstated in the farm, which comprises about 200 acres. The Commissioners, however, do not intend to give him the whole farm, as it is considered that it would be too large for him. The matter is at present under consideration.

Case of Edward Brady on the Gerrard Estate.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Edward Brady has applied to the Estates Commissioners to be reinstated in his former holding on the estate of Mr. Gerrard, Gibbstown, Navan, county Meath; and what action has been taken in this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners cannot trace the receipt of any application from Edward Brady for restoration to a holding on the estate of Mr. Gerrard; but they have received an application from an Edward Bradley, and this is under consideration.

Case of Francis Hopkins on the Lyster Smythe Estate.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the application of Francis Hopkins to be reinstated in his former holding on the estate of Colonel Lyster Smythe, situate at Nobber, county Meath, has yet been considered by the Estates Commissioners; and what is the result.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The application of Francis Hopkins for reinstatement or for a new holding is under the consideration of the Estates Commissioners, who have not yet come to a decision on the matter.

Case of Christopher Carolan on the Estate of Lord Gormanstown.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Christopher Carolan as representative of James Nulty, an evicted tenant on the estate of Lord Gormanstown, Kilbride, Nobber, county Meath, has applied to the Estates Commissioners for an equivalent farm; and what action, if any, has been taken in his case.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners received the application in question, and after due inquiry and consideration decided to take no action in the matter.

Pay of Imperial Yeomen transferring to the Territorial Force.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether non-commisioned officers and men of the Imperial Yeomanry who elect to serve in the Territorial Forces to complete their period of engagement, are to receive pay at the rates now existing in the Imperial Yeomanry, or at the rates assigned to their branch of the Territorial forces.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Men of the Imperial Yeomanry enlisting into the Territorial Force for the unexpired portion of their Imperial Yeomanry engagement or re-engagement will be allowed to retain Yeomanry rates and conditions of pay for the period for which they re-enlist. Non-commissioned officers paid as such at the end of the 1907 training may retain Imperial Yeomanry rates and conditions of pay until the end of the 1910 training if they continue to serve as non-commissioned officers for so long.

The Management of the Royal College of Surgeons.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Prime Minister whether he will state what action has been taken by the Lord President of the Council in regard to the memorial which was presented to the Prime Minister in the session before last, on behalf of members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, asking him to take such steps as might secure to members some voice in the management of the college and its property; and what reply has been received from the council of the college to representations made by them by the Lord President.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*) It is a matter of common knowledge that, in reply to the different deputations which he received, the Lord President expressed the general sympathy of the Government with the objects of the memorial; but the council of the Royal College appear to maintain the rigour of their attitude on the subject.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Rosyth Works Contract.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether any provision is being made in the contract for the works at Rosyth to secure trade union rates of wages being paid to the navvies and other workmen who will be employed upon the construction of such works; and whether the contract will also provide machinery for deciding what are the proper rates, seeing that at present, owing to the nature of the case, there can be no already existing standard.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): In accordance with the Resolution of this House, the contract will contain the usual fair wages clause. The question whether, in the circumstances of this case, any special machinery is needed will be considered before the contract is let; and if the hon. Member has any suggestion to offer, that will be duly considered.

Tuberculosis among Soldiers.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, what action he proposes to take in regard to soldiers suffering from tuberculosis, in view of the findings of the Select Committee appointed to go into the matter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The recommendations of the Select Committee have been recently considered by the Government as a whole. The decision is that, however desirable the special provision recommended by the Committee in the case of soldiers discharged from the Army because of tuberculosis, it is impossible to justify the assumption of this new kind of obligation by the State unless it is extended to other services as well as the Army, and possibly more widely still. The question thus raised becomes one of great gravity and cannot be decided by any single Department.

Woolwich Arsenal Discharges.

MR. JOHN WARD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has considered the question of suspending further discharges of workmen at Woolwich Arsenal, with a view to such workmen as may be suitable being transferred to those Departments of His Majesty's dockyards where excessive overtime is being worked by thousands of workmen.

MR. HALDANE: The War Office is consulting the Admiralty on this matter.

The Zakka Khel Expedition.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether correspondents of the Press have been permitted to accompany the expedition against the Zakka Khels, and, if so, how many, and what are the newspapers they represent; what has been the reply of Lord Kitchener in response to the right hon. Gentleman's cablegram on this subject which reached Lord Kitchener before the starting of the expedition; whether the practice in recent times has been that Press correspondents are permitted to accompany field forces subject to the supervision of a military Press censorship, to be exercised only in restraining the communication of information which might benefit the enemy in counteracting military operations; whether this practice is to be observed in reference to the presence of the representatives of the Press in the Zakka expedition; and, if not, what is the reason for this departure.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs): Three Press correspondents have so far applied for and received permission to accompany the expedition: they represent two English and six Indian newspapers. I have addressed no telegram to the Commander-in-Chief in India; but on all subjects connected with this expedition I am in communication with the Government of India. The usual practice as to censorship, which is as stated in the Question, will no doubt be followed.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: What are the English newspapers represented with the expedition? I suppose *The Times*?

MR. MORLEY: One is *The Times* and the other is the *Daily Mail*.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Hear, hear.

MR. MORLEY: I do not know what the hon. Member means by that ejaculation. Does he mean I am to exercise a Press censorship?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: What I mean is—Is Lord Kitchener of Omdurman to exercise a Press censorship? You recollect his arrangements.

[No further Answer was given.]

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether any, and, if so, what, directions have been given with reference to the furnishing of exact information of the numbers of the killed and wounded of the Zakka Khel in the various punitive operations of the expedition; and, having regard to the fact that, while in recent wars with native races, approximate numbers of the killed have been given there is little account of the wounded or of their ultimate fate, what directions, if any, have been given that the same standards of conduct should be observed in this expedition as in warfare with a civilised race, and what are the guarantees, if any, for their observance.

MR. MORLEY: No directions have been given in either case. It is clearly impossible to require exact information as to the casualities of an enemy, more especially if, as in this case, it is his practice, if possible, to carry off his dead and wounded. As to the second part of the Question, I am confident that the discipline and humanity of the troops and their commanders render unnecessary any special orders of the kind suggested in the Question. Perhaps I may also be allowed to answer the Question on the Paper which the hon. Gentleman has addressed to the Secretary of State for War. I am informed by the Government of India that no expanding bullets have been issued to the troops, and none are kept in store in India.

The Question referred to was as follows:—

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the dum-dum bullets constructed to expand on impact, invented by a British officer in the town in India from which they are named, which were condemned by the overwhelming volume of opinion at the Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and were not used in the late South African War, are being used by the British troops in the Zakka Khel expedition; and, if so, whether he will peremptorily forbid their use.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is it in accordance with humanity for the troops to destroy the houses and carry off the food, corn, and cattle of the inhabitants of the valley?

MR. MORLEY: If my hon. friend thinks that military operations can be conducted on the principle that regulates our own pacific dealings, I am afraid his view is chimerical.

MR. LUPTON pressed for a direct Answer to his Question.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Question hardly arises out of that on the Paper.

Blocking Motion.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the hon. and learned Member for the Walton Division of Liverpool, when he will place on the Notice Paper of the House of Commons the Resolution of which he has given notice of his intention to move in reference to the situation on the Indian frontier; whether he has taken any, and, if so, what steps to secure an opportunity for the discussion of his Resolution; and whether he intends to take any steps with a view of securing its discussion.

MR. F. E. SMITH: In answer to the first part of the Question, the production of the Resolution will not be unduly delayed, having regard to the circumstances under which the notice was set down. In answer to the second part of the Question, I am attentively watching the Parliamentary situation, and will not fail to apprise the hon. Gentleman should a favourable opportunity present itself of initiating a discussion.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: My hon. and learned friend has given a perfectly satisfactory Answer. Will he ask the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs to second the Motion?

Mr. F. E. SMITH: I must ask the hon. Member for notice of that Question.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for the Montgomery District when he will place upon the Notice Paper of the House of Commons the Resolution of which he has given notice of his intention to move in reference to the Zakka Khels expedition; whether he has taken any, and, if so, what steps to secure an opportunity for the discussion of his Resolution; and whether he intends to take any steps with a view of securing discussion.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): In answer to the first part of the Question—at an early date. In answer to the second part of the Question—at an early Parliamentary opportunity. In answer to the third part of the Question—so far as I am in a position to answer for His Majesty's Government, Yes.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Will the hon. Gentleman take an early opportunity of using his great influence with the Government?

Mr. REES: I have never had an opportunity of testing that influence.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Will the hon. Member send a copy of that valuable reply to the Executive Committee of the Radical Party in his own constituency?

Mr. REES: The affairs of my constituency are between myself and my constituents. They have nothing whatever to do with the hon. Member.

Primary Education in India.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India when it is proposed to introduce free primary education into India.

Mr. MORLEY: I am not yet in a position to make any statement on the subject. As the hon. Member is no doubt aware, the Government of India have referred the question to the local Governments, but I have not yet received their final recommendations.

Indian Civil Service.

Mr. HART-DAVIES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can give the total number of Government civil appointments in India carrying a salary of £250 per annum and over, excluding those reserved for the Covenanted Civil Service; and will he state the number of these appointments held by Europeans and natives of India, respectively.

Mr. MORLEY: I cannot give the exact figures at the present time, but in 1903 the total number of the appointments referred to was, roughly, 6,000, of which rather more than 3,400 were held by Europeans, and rather less than 2,600 by natives of India. This estimate is based on a return published in the *Gazette of India* for 4th June, 1904, to which I would refer the hon. Member for detailed figures.

Indian Famine Relief Works.

Mr. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what percentage of the inhabitants of India are at present in receipt of famine prevention relief; and how that percentage compares with the percentage of persons in receipt of outdoor relief in Great Britain.

Mr. MORLEY: According to the latest information about 740,000 persons are in receipt of famine relief in the whole of India including native states. Calculated on a total population of 300,000,000 the ratio is about one quarter of 1 per cent. But the ratio would, of course, be much higher if struck on the population of the districts where the crops have failed and the provision of the Famine Relief Codes are in force. The ratio of paupers in receipt of outdoor relief to the inhabitants of England and Wales was stated to be a little over 1½ per cent. in 1907.

St. Helena Flax Industry.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies how many people are employed in the new flax industry in St. Helena; and whether this industry promises to expand successfully.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): The Governor has not yet reported the exact number of men employed on the Government fibre mill in St. Helena. In addition to the men so employed, a considerable number of small proprietors and of those who are in the service of the large landowners must have benefited, either directly or indirectly, through the establishment of the fibre industry. In reply to the latter part of the hon. Member's Question, it is too early as yet to say with confidence that the industry will expand successfully; the mill was only opened at the beginning of December and the first consignment of fibre and tow has only just reached the London market. The Governor reports, however, that there appears to be a general feeling in the Island that the fibre industry has come to stay; and he is himself sanguine that it will do a great deal towards placing St. Helena on her feet again.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) asked whether in view of the great success attending this industry in New Zealand the Government would obtain a report from an expert from that country?

MR. CHURCHILL: If my memory serves me, the industry was initiated by a gentleman from New Zealand.

Distress in St. Helena.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what further steps he intends to take to cope with the distress prevailing in the island of St. Helena.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am glad to say that the Governor has reported to the Secretary of State that the situation in St. Helena is steadily improving, and that matters generally are much brighter than they were a year ago. I am informing the hon. Member, in reply to another Question, of the opening of the Government fibre mill; and improvements to the water supply for the mill, which are being carried out at the present moment from funds provided by His Majesty's Government, should provide a partial and temporary remedy for unemployment in the island. I may mention also that within the last few days a grant of £360 has been agreed to for the maintenance, during 1908, of the roads required in connection with the fibre industry; this grant should serve the same purpose. In addition, the lace industry, which was started last year in order to provide employment for the women and girls in St. Helena, has now got into working order. The hon. Member may like to know that specimens of the lace produced are on view at the offices of the League of the Empire at Caxton Hall, Westminster. In view of the comparatively large amount which His Majesty's Government is providing, and the improvement which the Governor reports in the situation, the Secretary of State does not consider that any further action is necessary at present in the direction of providing relief work from Imperial funds.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport): Is this a Government Factory in St. Helena?

MR. CHURCHILL: Yes, a Government fibre factory has been started in order to provide a remedy for unemployment.

MR. WARDLE: When may we expect to have Government factories in England?

MR. CHURCHILL: England is not under the Colonial Office.

MR. LUPTON: Have we not already several hundred Government workshops —workhouses?

[No Answer was returned.]

Emigration from St. Helena.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the scheme of State-aided emigration has proved successful at St. Helena; how many of the inhabitants have availed themselves of it; and whether it still continues.

MR. CHURCHILL: It has not been found possible to arrange any scheme of emigration from St. Helena, but, as I informed the hon. Member in June last, a number of men have found employment in the Cape Colony.

Chief Crown Agent for the Colonies.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, when such a large salary as £2,500 a year was sanctioned in the case of the Chief Crown Agent for the Colonies (Sir Ernest Blake), so placing him upon a par in regard to salary with officials of great commercial and financial institutions, the Colonial Office had in mind the fact that, whilst the former is entitled to a considerable pension, no such rule obtains in the case of the latter; whether the Chief Crown Agent can now claim his pension; and, if so, what would be the amount of the same.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State has no personal responsibility for the amount of the salary sanctioned in the case of Sir Ernest Blake, the amount having been settled by the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square. Lord Elgin is certainly not prepared to say that he regards the arrangement then made as excessive or improper, having regard to the very great scale of the business transacted, and to its special character. I understand that the Chief Crown Agent is in a position to claim a pension, but the amount is determined by the Secretary of State on date of retirement. As I informed the hon. Member on the 11th instant, Lord Elgin has decided to appoint a Committee to deal with pensions and cognate subjects. I hope to be able to make an announcement with regard to its composition shortly, as the preliminaries to its appointment are already well advanced, and I deprecate in the meantime questions bearing upon matters which will fall within the purview of its deliberations.

Trinidad Cocoa Plantation—Indentured Labour.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware that indentured labourers from the East Indies to the Trinidad cocoa plantations in many cases are paid only 3s. per week instead of 5s. 2½d. per week, as guaranteed to them before leaving home; that such labourers are unable to obtain redress; and, if so, will he take action with a view to the men receiving the wage stipulated at the time of their engagement.

MR. CHURCHILL: I venture to think that the hon. Member has been misinformed as to the figures. My information goes to show that indentured immigrants are promised a daily wage of 1s. 0½d. a day, six days a week, and that the Immigration Ordinance provides for payment of wages at not less than this rate on every day on which the labourer is willing and able to work. If the hon. Member can give me any specific cases of breach of the Ordinance I shall be happy to have inquiry made.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I shall have great pleasure in providing the information.

Recruiting Indentured Labour in Madagascar.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will take steps to expedite the completion of the business necessary to enable him to lay Papers dealing with the recruiting of indentured labourers from the Island of Madagascar.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir; I see no reason why a correspondence should be manufactured in order to lay Papers. The Transvaal Government will continue the correspondence when they desire to do so.

Galapagos Islands.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any Report has been received from the trustworthy agent who was sent to the Galapagos Islands last August, by the consul at Guayaquil, to inquire into the case of the British subjects kept in servitude there

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): His Majesty's Consul at Guayaquil has reported the result of his agent's mission to the Galapagos Islands in connection with the British subjects detained on the group against their will. The agent has, after due investigation, paid the debts of twelve of the labourers, whom he has brought back with him to Guayaquil. They are subsequently to be repatriated, should they wish it, to their homes in the West Indies. The two remaining labourers, however, declined to leave the Islands, even if they were enabled to do so by their debts being paid; and they have accordingly been left on the group.

Taxation Proposals.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the expediency of establishing an employers' tax of a penny in the £ upon the amount of wages and salaries paid to their employees.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I can only once again repeat the assurance that I am always giving—that all suggestions for taxation are receiving, and will receive, my careful consideration.

Departmental Overlapping.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the proposed inquiry as to the allocation of business between Departments will include inquiry into the overlapping of official statistics, the want of co-ordination of statistics, and the possibility of combining improvement with economy, under the direction of the Treasury, the Statistical Department of the Board of Trade, the office of the Registrar-General, or otherwise.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet in a position to make a statement as to the precise scope of the proposed inquiry, but I will take care that my right hon. friend's suggestion is not overlooked when the matter is being considered.

Smith's Vaults, Ulverston.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been called to the case of the taking away of the licence of the premises known as Smith's Vaults, Ulverston, and the payment of compensation amounting to £3,664, which has been succeeded by a club, known as the Magpie Club, on premises adjacent to the above, and said to belong to the same firm; and, if so, what action he proposes to take in regard to such cases.

MR. ASQUITH: My attention has been called to several cases of the kind referred to, and the matter is one which is receiving the careful attention of the Government in connection with the Licensing Bill now being prepared.

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

MR. GLOVER (St. Helens): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state when he will introduce the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I hope to introduce the Bill in the course of this week. As the Bill will be the same as last year's with the exception only of the necessary alterations of dates, no introductory speech will be required.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will consider the expediency of promoting legislation for the purpose of requiring the banks of the United Kingdom to make a return showing the total of the sums of money in their hands in respect of dormant and obsolete accounts.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I am not at present prepared to promote legislation for this purpose, but I am making inquiries into the matter.

Unemployment in New York.

*MR. SOAMES (Norfolk, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that 34 per cent. of the members of trade unions in New York are out of work; and whether he can give the corresponding figures for the United Kingdom.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I understand that the percentage quoted is in accordance with the official returns of unemployment at 31st December last in New York City. About nine-tenths of the total unemployment is said to have been due to lack of work and the remainder to trade disputes, sickness, and other causes. On this basis the proportion of trade unionists out of work in New York City in December from causes included in the Board of Trade Returns would have been about 31 per cent. It is right, however, that I should state that the figures for New York City are not in all resp cts comparable with those for the United Kingdom as a whole, since among other reasons the trade unions on which they are based include a much larger proportion of building operatives. But I need not point out that even after allowance has been made for this factor the returns show a much worse condition of unemployment than that which prevails in this country.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln) asked the total number of unemployed in New York City.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am afraid I cannot answer that without notice.

Railway Inquiry.

MR. WARDLE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether an inquiry into the existing relations between the Railways and the State is to be held; and, if so, if he can say what the nature and extent of the inquiry will be and when the inquiry will commence.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am not in a position to answer my hon. friend's Question at the moment, but I shall be glad to do so later if he will put it down for a day towards the end of next week.

MR. WARDLE asked if the inquiry now proceeding of which they read in the newspapers had any reference to the inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman announced last week?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No; that is a Committee which was set up six weeks or two months ago. In reference to the debate of last week, I am now considering the question whether the inquiry then promised can be conducted by that Commission or whether it will be necessary to set up a perfectly independent Commission. I must consult the views of those who represent the Board of Trade.

Export of Horses to Rotterdam.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has any official information as to the number of worn-out horses sent from Nottingham and Worksop to the Continent, and as to whether these animals are there converted into sausages and then imported into this country for consumption as human food; if so, can he say to what port on the Continent they are exported; and what proportion of this sausage is consumed in this country.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I have no information as to the number of worn-out horses sent from Nottingham and Worksop to the Continent. I have not met with any definite evidence pointing to the importation into this country of sausages prepared from horses, though it is sometimes alleged that sausage meat imported in bulk contains horse meat. I have the subject of the importation of sausage meat under consideration in connection with the regulations which I am preparing under the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act of last session.

MR. RICHARDSON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the regulations will be ready?

MR. JOHN BURNS: So far as my Department is concerned, very soon, but I cannot promise when specific action will be taken as other interests have to be consulted.

MR. JOHN WARD: Does the right hon. Gentleman's Answer indicate an intention to draw up regulations allowing horse-flesh sausages to come in?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Not if I can help it.

Lambeth Workhouse.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the overcrowding at the Lambeth Workhouse to the extent of 257 inmates, and to the fact that, in consequence, a number of them are sleeping on the floor; and if he intends taking any action in the matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to the overcrowding of the Lambeth Workhouses. Certain alterations have been made which have enabled the numbers for which the workhouses are certified to be enlarged, and the guardians are now making arrangements whereby further accommodation will be provided. The matter will continue to receive my attention.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): Has the Local Government Board no power to compel reactionary authorities to put into operation the Act relating to the unemployed?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Not a great deal of power, but what persuasion I could I have exercised.

Vaccination Exemption Certificates—Case of Mr. Taplin.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that Mr. Taplin, of 5, Lancell Street, Church Street, Stoke Newington, the parent of a child born on 2nd September, 1907, tried twice before the child was four months old to get exemption at the North London Police Court, but was refused by the magistrate there on the ground that he had not sufficient reason for an exemption certificate to be granted; whether he will give the local vaccination officer instructions not to prosecute in this particular case, seeing that the parent of the child has twice lost time from his work on purpose to comply with the law then in force; and whether he will introduce a Bill, as soon as possible, protecting from prosecution all those parents who have tried at any time since 12th August, 1898, to get exemption and failed.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have no information as to the case referred to. The new Act came into operation on 1st January, and prior to that date a person desiring to obtain exemption from penalties under the Vaccination Act had to satisfy the magistrate to whom application was made that he conscientiously believed that vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of the child. This, as I understand, the applicant in the case in question failed to do. I am afraid I could not undertake to propose legislation for altering the Act of last session in the sense suggested.

Ilminster Sub-Postmaster.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether in view of the fact that the vacancy for a sub-postmaster at Ilminster, Taunton, was advertised recently at a salary of £120 per annum, and that a number of the members of the established staff applied for the position, he will state the reason for its being allocated to a person who was not a member of the postal staff.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. The officer selected for the appointment is a member of the established staff, and has served in the Post Office for many years.

Political Organisations in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether having regard to the expressed view of His Majesty's Government that no political organisation can be useful unless it is a party organisation, he will rescind his decision forbidding the existence of a branch of the Primrose League among postal servants; and if he will state why Liberal party organisations and Socialist organisations are permitted among Postal employees.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware that His Majesty's Government have expressed the view attributed to them by the hon. Member. The decision I gave in regard to the Primrose League was founded on the existing rules governing the conduct of Post Office servants as civil servants. It was to the effect that while Post Office servants are not forbidden to join societies of a political character, such as the Primrose League, they are expected to maintain a certain reserve in political matters; and that it had been decided by my predecessors that Post Office servants ought not to hold office under the League; and that I saw no reason to alter this decision. I understand that, in conformity with this decision, those postal servants who were interested in the matter have formed, or are about to form, themselves into a Constitutional Society, which is to be conducted independent of and apart from Party politics. I am not aware of the existence of any Liberal Party organisation within the Post Office. The only Socialist Society of the existence of which I am aware is the Civil Service Socialist Society (into which the Pioneer Socialist League has, I understand, been incorporated) which is open to membership from any branch of the Civil Service. According to its constitution, a copy of which has been furnished to me, the object of the society is to educate the members of the service in the principles of Socialism. Political action is expressly stated to be outside its province, and the general funds of the society are not to be used for any other organisation.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that the Attorney-General stated in this House a few days ago that no political organisation was useful which was not a Party organisation?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware of it. I understand that the Attorney-General does not quite recognise the words put into his mouth. However, I am responsible for the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked whether the Postmaster-General would inquire whether there was a branch of the League of Young Liberals in the Post Office.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): How does the right hon. Gentleman reconcile his refusal to allow a branch of the Primrose League in connection with the Post Office with his permission to establish a branch of the Civil Service Socialist League?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I understand the decision was given by my predecessor, who has more knowledge of the Primrose League than I can claim to possess. He decided that it was of such a nature as not to be suitable for members of the Post Office to take office in. With regard to the Civil Service Socialist League, I understand that its constitution expressly provides that political action is outside its province. I, of course, have to take into consideration in these matters the constitution of the societies.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): Is the House to understand that the Postmaster-General considers Socialism is not politics?

MR. THORNE: Not at all—economics.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: My opinion with regard to Socialism, or any other subject, is not in question. It is a question concerning the attitude and action of these societies in the Post Office.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was governed by the decision of his predecessor, or whether he would not exercise his own discretion.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not bound by the decision of my predecessor, but, naturally, I take his decision into consideration in deciding these matters.

Boy Clerks in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether it was arranged before he became Postmaster-General that every boy clerk employed in the Post Office, whose service is satisfactory, should have the opportunity of competing for a permanent appointment; and will he state what opportunities Post Office boy clerks possess other and better than any boy in the United Kingdom in this respect.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Every boy clerk whose service is satisfactory has now, and has always had, the opportunity of competing for permanent appointments of several kinds; but the boys who compete are of course more numerous than the appointments available. Certain clerical posts in the Engineering Department, and Registry Assistantships are reserved for boy clerks in the Post Office exclusively. Assistant Clerkships are also reserved for boy clerks, and in the open competition for Second Division Clerkships boy clerks receive the special advantage of service marks. Some of these advantages are shared by boy clerks in other Government Departments, but none of them are shared by boys outside Government service. The question of the boy clerks is receiving the consideration of the Treasury.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that there are now over 1,000 boy clerks employed in the Post Office, the large majority of whom are in London, and that only about ten appointments as Registry Assistants and certain clerical posts in the Engineering Department are annually reserved for the 1,000 or more boy clerks; and whether as he finds it impossible to create other appointments, he will take the alternative of reducing considerably the number of boy clerks in the Post Office, so that the problem of boy labour may be grappled with.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The number of boy clerks employed in the Post Office is a little over 1,000. Of these only a fraction, of course, leave each year. For these there are a considerable number of openings of various sorts. During the last year the special opportunities afforded to boy clerks approaching the age of twenty of securing permanent situations in the Post Office resulted in twenty-three obtaining appointments as Registry Assistants, and five as junior clerks in the Engineering Department. In addition, forty-seven boy clerks in the Post Office were appointed to Assistant Clerkships and others to Second Division Clerkships. At the same time a large number have unfortunately to leave the service. For this reason, I am already considering whether it is possible to reduce the number of boy clerks employed in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Does the number of boy clerks who obtained appointments in the Post Office in the period referred to in the question show an increase on the previous year or not?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not think it shows a decrease.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Are not permanent appointments throughout the Civil Service available to boy clerks?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I cannot answer that, but I know the Treasury has the whole matter under consideration, and we are really doing our best to find employment for these boys.

Post Office Savings Bank.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether there is at present a lack of candidates for female appointments in the Post Office Savings Bank and other branches of the Post Office; whether boy clerks who are capable of performing the work are being discharged daily; and whether he will consider the advisability of re-arranging the staff, so that instead of endeavouring to induce girls to undertake duties under his Department he will utilise the material already to hand by the permanent retention of suitable boy clerks.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have no reason to suppose that there is now any lack of candidates for the female appointments mentioned. The boy clerks to whom the hon. Member refers are apparently those who, in accordance with the conditions of their employment, which apply to the whole Civil Service, terminate their service at the age of twenty. One of the advantages gained by the recent re-arrangement in the Savings Bank is that it will permit of some reduction in the number of boy clerks employed.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Of boy clerks?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: In this case the boy clerks are not under the

Post Office, and they leave at twenty under the Treasury regulations.

Kirkchester School.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his personal attention has been called to the case of Kirkchester, in the West Riding of Yorkshire; and whether the Board of Education is prepared to accept the proposal of the governors of the endowed school there to provide a new central school without imposing any burden upon the rates, and under such conditions that the wishes of the parents, whether members of the Church of England or Nonconformists, with regard to the religious instruction of their children would receive satisfaction.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): I beg to be excused from distinguishing between cases which have and which have not been brought to my personal notice. I take full responsibility for all. A proposal of the governors is before the Board, but the questions involved are extremely complicated, and I am not yet in a position to make any statement on the subject. I must not, however, be taken as admitting that the conditions proposed would meet the wishes of the parents, whether they are members of the Church of England or Noncontormists, with regard to the religious instruction of the children.

MR. LANE-FOX asked if the right hon. Gentleman would order further inquiry or agree to receive a deputation from the local education authority, as the time had nearly run out?

MR. MCKENNA said he did not think an inquiry was desirable, but he would look further into the matter and answer the hon. Member later on.

Teachers' Superannuation Fund.

MR. LANE-FOX: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what was the total number of male and female teachers respectively paying into the Teachers' Superannuation Fund on 31st March, 1907; what was the total amount paid by the teachers in the year ending 31st March, 1907, and the total amount for the seven years ending 31st March, 1907; what was the total sum paid to the teachers in the year ending 31st March 1907, and when the promised revision of the scale of such payments will be made known to teachers; and whether he can yet state what alterations will be made in the amount of superannuation payments to be paid in future to the teachers.

MR. MCKENNA: If my hon. friend will allow me I will circulate the Answer, which must necessarily be rather long, with the Votes.

Swine Fever Regulations.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, in view of the statement made by the President of the Board last December that he hoped to be able to revise the regulations with reference to swine fever and to remove some of the hardships incidental thereto, he will, in devising fresh regulations, bear in mind the representations made on the subject of the exclusion of pigs from Ireland; and whether, in view of the greater success obtained by Ireland in dealing with swine fever, he will see that any future regulations will not unfairly restrict the importation of pigs from Ireland.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The representations made by the hon. Member will be kept in view, but the new Orders which my noble friend proposes to issue do not relate to importation of swine from Ireland to great Britain.

Overtime in the Customs Service.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the amount of Crown overtime paid to preventive officers and preventive men for the year 1907; and the number of hours of Sunday duty performed by the rerummage crews in Gravesend in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, respectively.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Mr. RUNCIMAN): I am informed that the amount of Crown overtime paid to preventive officers and preventive men for the year 1907 was £10,792 19s. 10d. The number of hours of Sunday duty performed by the re-rummage crews in Gravesend in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, was: 1905, 325 hours; 1906, 411 hours; 1907, 412 hours.

Tilbury Dock—Baggage Crews.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will explain why there was but one baggage crew in attendance for three passenger ships with 140 passengers on Sunday, the 9th instant, at Tilbury Dock, while officers on river duty at Gravesend were obliged to attend to passengers in Tilbury Dock, thereby leaving the river unprotected during their absence.

MR. J. A. PEASE: I am informed that the three vessels referred to were berthed at 8.15 a.m., 1.55 p.m., and 3.48 p.m., respectively. The first was dealt with by the station staff, the second by the same staff supplemented by a crew for whose attendance arrangements had previously been made, and these staffs also dealt with the third vessel. It is not the case that the river was left unprotected as stated in the last part of the Question. I may add that the standing directions on the subject of Sunday attendance, made in the interests of economy and of the staff, are that great care is to be taken that no more officers are called out for duty than are absolutely necessary. The Board of Customs inform me that they are satisfied that the staff provided on the occasions in question was adequate for both classes of duty.

Government Establishments and the Employers' Liability Act.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a new or revised scheme of compensation to workmen who may be injured while employed in Government establishments has been submitted to the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for approval; and, if so, was the scheme submitted to the employees for their consideration; and were they given a reasonable time to decide whether they should accept or reject the scheme.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: Yes, Sir, a revised scheme has been submitted to the Chief Registrar and approved by him. It has since been submitted to the employees for consideration and for their acceptance if they think fit. The Treasury requested the Departments to allow the workmen a week's interval, where possible, before deciding as to the acceptance of the scheme.

MR. W. T. WILSON asked if in some of the dockyards the papers were called in in less than a week?

*MR. J. A. PEASE said that the Treasury understood that the workmen desired a week's notice, and had consequently recommended that where possible such notice should be given. The Treasury had no knowledge as to whether in some cases less than a week's notice had been given, and any question on the subject should be addressed to the Minister representing the Department concerned.

MR. JENKINS (Chatham): Why have the Government initiated a scheme to enable Government employees to contract out of an Act passed unanimously by this House?

*MR. J. A. PEASE asked for notice.

Superannuation Regulations.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the decision of the Government, under the Superannuation Act, 1859, in respect of ex-sailors and ex-soldiers, was arrived at without ascertaining the number of men affected by such decision; and whether the Government are satisfied that these men have been adequately recompensed for their services, having regard to the pay and conditions of other servants of His Majesty, whose remuneration and conditions of service have been reconsidered and improved since 1859.

*MR. J. A. PEASE: The Answer to both parts of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: What is the objection to giving any figures to the House?

*MR. J. A. PEASE said the collection of information with regard to numbers was not only very troublesome, but somewhat expensive, and the information was not of sufficient advantage to justify the trouble and the expense.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Is the House to understand that the question whether the number is large or small is a matter of indifference to the Government?

*MR. J. A. PEASE said it was a question not of number, but of principle.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: What is the principle involved?

[No Answer was returned.]

River Leven.

MR. R. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has now received the Report of an expert upon the condition of the River Leven; if so, whether the Report indicates a satisfactory state of matters; and whether the Report will be laid upon the Table of the House for the information of Members.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I have received the Report referred to by my hon. friend. The state of matters disclosed is not satisfactory: the Report will be laid upon the Table.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: When may we expect the Report?

MR. SINCLAIR: I will lay it as soon as possible.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman indicate a day?

MR. SINCLAIR: No, Sir.

Execution at Inverness

MR. ANNAN BRYCE (Inverness Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the sentence on Joseph Hume, condemned to death at Aberdeen for a murder committed in Morayshire, is, under the Judge's order to be carried out at Inverness where no execution has taken place for seventy-three years, and where the prison is in the middle of a residential district, and that a very strong feeling has been aroused in Inverness against this arrangement, whether he can, and if so, will, order the venue to be changed, or failing this whether he will give instructions that the tolling of the bell and display of the black flag be dispensed with.

MR. SINCLAIR: The practice is for the sentence of death to be carried out in the prison for the district in which the crime was committed. Hume committed murder in the County of Elgin, and Inverness prison is the prison for that county. Accordingly, the magistrates of Inverness are, in terms of the Warrant by the High Court, charged with the execution of the capital sentence. Instructions have been given for the tolling of the bell to be dispensed with on this occasion.

Dromod Police Hut.

MR. McKEAN (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the entire absence of crime in the district, as also to the fact that the alleged reasons for its erection have long since ceased to exist, he will suggest to the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary the advisability of having the police hut removed from Dromod, near Ballybay in the county of Monaghan.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The police hut in question was originally provided upwards of twenty years ago as a protection post, but for the past ten years it has been used as a permanent police station with a district attached, and the police employed there perform all the ordinary duties appertaining to a police station.

The locality is peaceable, but the two nearest police stations are each five miles distant, and the Inspector-General thinks it necessary that the station should be retained for ordinary police purposes.

Mr. McKEAN: And is it an example of retrenchment to keep on a hut which the Inspector-General says is not necessary?

Mr. CHERRY: On the contrary, he says it is required as an ordinary police station and that is the reason why it is retained.

Loans for Seeds.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the loan which is being given to boards of guardians in Ireland this year to procure seed, oats, and potatoes, in consequence of the failure of those crops last year, will be given free of interest, the same as has been done on former occasions, with a view to lessening the cost of the seed on the people getting it.

Mr. CHERRY: The Answer to this Question is in the negative. Prior to the year 1905 the interest on seed loans was paid out of the Church Temporalities Fund, which fund now forms part of the endowment of the Department of Agriculture. Interest was charged on the loans made in 1905, but the Department gave a grant towards the cost of the seed which more than covered the interest charged on the loans.

Land Purchase in County Leitrim.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many estates in County Leitrim have been sold since the passing of the Land Act of 1903; and also how many of those sales have been completed and taken over by the Irish Land Commission.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that up to the 8th instant proceedings for purchase had been instituted before them in respect of seventy-nine estates in County Leitrim, and advances had actually been made in respect of eighteen of these estates.

Reinstated Tenants in County Leitrim.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many evicted tenants have been reinstated in County Leitrim, under the Land Act of 1903, and also under the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907; how many cases of reinstatement of evicted tenants in the same county are at present under consideration; and if he can state in how many cases have the present occupiers of evicted farms in County Leitrim expressed their willingness to the Estates Commissioners to surrender those farms and accept compensation.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners are at present preparing for presentation to Parliament the Return prescribed by Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, which will contain particulars of all cases of the restoration of evicted tenants. It is not considered desirable to delay the compilation of that Return by diverting the Commissioners' staff to the preparation of partial Returns in a different form. The prescribed Return will be presented as soon as possible.

Kenmare Estate, County Kerry.

Mr. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland why the Congested Districts Board failed to purchase the congested portion of the Kenmare estate, County Kerry, when it was offered to them; and if the Board propose to do anything in future to deal with the congested districts on this estate as they have dealt with similar districts elsewhere, or do they intend to allow the opportunity of dealing with a large area and a congested population to pass without using their powers to improve the position of affairs on the estate.

Mr. CHERRY: In November last Lord Kenmare offered for sale to the Congested Districts Board the portion of his estate in the congested electoral divisions of Coon, Coolies, and Doocarrig, at prices which represent a reduction of 7s. 3d. in the £ on first term rents, and 5s. 3d. on second term rents, these prices having been agreed upon between a committee of the tenants and Lord Kenmare. The Congested Districts Board decided that they could not purchase on the proposed terms. If they should take over the property with the sale price of each holding to the tenant already fixed, they would have no power to enter upon holdings for the construction of roads and drains or the apportionment of turbary, nor could they carry out any re-arrangement of the holdings without the consent of all the landholders concerned. Moreover, the Board have no funds at present available for improvement works. In these circumstances, the Board do not propose to make any further effort to purchase the property.

Dunmanway Labourers Cottages.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state what stage has been reached in the improvement scheme under the Labourers Acts by the Dunmanway District Council; what is the cause of the delay in sending the petition for the local inquiry to the Local Government Board; and will steps be taken to expedite matters so that labourers living in unsanitary houses may be promptly provided with better dwellings.

Mr. CHERRY: The Local Government Board have ascertained from the clerk of the district council that the proposed scheme has not yet been signed. The maps in relation to the scheme appear to have been made out, and the notices prepared for service on the owners and occupiers. The Local Government Board are about to address the district council in regard to the unnecessary delay which appears to have taken place in the matter.

Tarmonbarry Weir Wall.

Mr. THOMAS F. SMYTH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if steps will be taken to have the weir wall at Tarmonbarry, on the River Shannon, lowered by at least two feet, as, owing to its present state, the farmers in county Leitrim who have low-lying lands suffer losses every year to the extent of several thousands of pounds, owing to their crops, particularly their hay crop, being flooded in consequence of the present great height of the Tarmonbarry weir wall.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: I am informed that the course proposed by the hon. Member would have the effect of destroying the navigation above the weir, and owing to this reason the Government do not feel justified in adopting the suggestion.

Irish Quit and Crown Rents.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury how much has been paid in redemption of quit and Crown rents in Ireland.

*Mr. J. A. PEASE: The amount received in respect of the redemption of quit, etc., rents in Ireland from 2nd July, 1827, when Irish Land Revenues were placed under the charge of the Commissioners of Woods, to 31st March, 1907, is £716,397.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: What has become of the money?

*Mr. J. A. PEASE: It has been mainly invested in Crown lands in the United Kingdom.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: How much was invested in Ireland?

*Mr. J. A. PEASE: I will ascertain if the hon. Member desires it.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: I am much obliged, but it will not give you much trouble as I know that not a single pound was invested.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

William Middlebrook, esquire, for the Borough of Leeds (South Division).

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.—1. "That, in the case of the Camborne Water, Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing

Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to deposit their Petition for a Bill." 2. "That, in the case of the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill." 3. "That, in the case of the Dover Graving Docks, Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill." 4. "That, in the case of the Margate Corporation Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the promoters have leave to insert the additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit." 5. "That, in the case of the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 128 in the case of the Petition of the 'Grimsby Rural District Council' against the Bill, the said Standing Order ought to be dispensed with."

Resolutions agreed to.

NEW BILL.

PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS (REGISTRATION) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the qualification and Registration of Parliamentary Voters and for other purposes relating to elections," presented by Sir Randal Cremer; supported by Mr. Burt, Mr. Bell, Mr. Cobbold, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Dudley Ward, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham); to be read a second time upon Thursday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 93.]

PRIVILEGES.

Mr. Attorney-General, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Mr. Balfour, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Ellis, Mr. MacNeill, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham) were nominated Members of the Committee of Privileges.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the Quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) (SALARIES, &c.).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): If this Resolution only dealt with the salaries of the new officials to be created for the purpose of working the provisions of this Bill, I should certainly discuss them myself, as far as I could, and oppose the further progress of the Resolution; but it also contains certain provisions for aiding small holdings and dealing with the difficulties of crofting areas in Scotland, and in these circumstances, so far as I am concerned, I see no reason why we should spend any fraction of the very short time that the Government has allocated to this Bill in discussing the Resolution. I recommend, therefore, my friends to offer no opposition.

Resolved, that for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, it is expedient to authorise—(i) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of the salaries of the chairman and of each of the other members of the Land Court; (ii) the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament, of—(a) the salaries and remuneration of the Agricultural Commissioners and other persons appointed or employed by them and by the Land Court, and the expenses incurred by the Land Court and the Agricultural Commissioners in the execution of their duties; (b) an annual sum not exceeding eighty-five thousand pounds for the use of the Agricultural Commissioners; (c) compensation in certain cases to members and officers of the Crofters Commission.—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): Sir, I do not know that it often falls to the lot of a Minister in this House to introduce a Bill for the third time, and under these circumstances, I would most humbly ask for the special consideration of the House in endeavouring to discharge the duty which falls upon me on this occasion. While much of what I have to say must be familiar to many hon. Gentlemen who sit opposite to me, there does lie upon me an obligation of some sort to state, as sufficiently as it is necessary, the details of the Bill, in order that the case may be fairly and properly presented. This Bill was first introduced in the session before last, in 1906. Last session it was again introduced and carried through all its stages in this House, and then it went to the House of Lords, where it failed to pass owing to action of the Opposition Peers. Two months after this Bill was introduced in this House last session—two months indeed after it was read a second time—the Small Holdings Bill was introduced by the Government for England and that Bill passed into law. As to a comparison between these two Bills, I mention the English Bill now in order to point out the distinction which is apt to render all such comparisons illusory. The English Bill provided solely for the creation of new holdings and allotments, but the aim of this Bill is not so simple, and no matter what your scheme may be, it cannot be so simple, for while there are in Scotland, as in England, county councils charged with duties under the Small Holdings Act of 1892, we have in addition in Scotland two other bodies which have powers in regard to small holdings, or what are virtually small holdings. Since 1886 the Statutory Crofters Commission has been at work in Scotland, and there is also the Congested Districts Board. Neither of these bodies has its analogue in England. The Congested Districts Board, although it has worked assiduously and has met with considerable success, is imperfectly equipped, and in the public interest it is in urgent need of reorganisation and of development for the proper discharge of its duties. These duties are somewhat miscellaneous. They relate to piers, harbour lights, roads, footpaths and the like. The Board performs further the duties of the Department of Agriculture for that part of Scotland, but its largest undertakings have been purchases of land for the purpose of re-sale to tenants, and latterly carrying out a scheme for the settlement of tenants upon land as tenants under the Crofters Act. On the other hand, the Crofters Commission is a judicial body charged with the duty of fixing fair rents and other duties laid upon them by the Statute. It has done this work with general acceptance, and while it is looked upon as the guardian of their rights by the great body of the crofters and tenants, it has the respect and support, and in many cases the gratitude, of proprietors in the Highlands, as being a competent and impartial tribunal which has done justice to all sides. I suggest no comparison with his colleagues, the other Commissioners, when I say that the success and the high public appreciation of the work of this Commission is largely and properly identified in Scotland with the name of the first, hitherto the only, Chairman of the Commission, whose recent death, so deeply and widely mourned by his friends, has made this important office vacant. I refer to Sir David Graham. His name will not be forgotten by the Highland people, and his death has deprived Scotland of an able, faithful, and distinguished public servant. Any Secretary for Scotland responsible for legislation on the subject of small holdings in Scotland is bound, therefore, to keep in view, not only the work of the county councils, of which there is only one instance in this respect in Scotland, but also the work of these two other authorities I have mentioned. This Bill does not touch in any shape or form the question of ownership of the land. It deals solely with conditions of occupation by the cultivating tenant. The House will naturally inquire why do we persevere with this Bill. On its merits, because we believe it to be urgently necessary, and because we believe—at any rate, that is our experience—that it is the only scheme which fits the facts of the situation. Why is this legislat on necessary? Nobody will deny that the business of farming has become more scientific. Cultivation, as it becomes more and more close, requires more brains, more education, more capital, and more security for the capital. Thirty years ago a fall in prices brought to a head an agitation among farmers of general education in this country for a remedy for their grievances The demand they put forward was for greater security of tenure, and the reply of Parliament was a series of Agricultural Holdings Act, beginning with the Act of 1879, the last of the series being the Act of last year. Among farmers of all sizes there are numerous cases still, I expect, at any rate in Scotland, in which the absence of security of tenure restrains the tenant from making improvements, acts as a check to his enterprise, and diminishes the productiveness of the soil, to his loss, and the loss of the community; and when we come to examine the circumstances of small holdings and small farms, Parliamentary inquiries, two of which have been held during the last sixteen or eighteen years, have told the same story. Small holdings are disappearing. In comparison with other countries, far less land is under such cultivation; there are far fewer small holdings in Scotland than in other countries. There is a far smaller proportion of our population living in the country districts and a far larger decrease of that rural population registered by every succeeding census. While the land has been brought under cultivation in recent years in foreign countries, in this country it has gone out of cultivation. While many of the best young men and women from the rural districts seek their fortune in America, Canada and other countries, and our small towns and villages are being starved for want of population, on the other hand you have the fact that our imports of perishable farm produce are enormously increased. The vital importance to the nation of a country population is admitted on all hands as valuable to agriculture and essential to the nation politically. If that is so, it is obvious that the present system of land tenure—whatever be its merits in other directions—has signally and disastrously failed to keep the people on the land. The fact is that the inducements are not sufficient, and we have to increase them. In discussing this Bill in another place last year Lord Balfour of Burleigh said—

> "It is more difficult for a landlord to get a good tenant than it is for a good tenant to get a farm."

I say that if that is the case, there can be no greater condemnation of the present system. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may say that that is theory and may argue that the real root of the evil which has produced this state of things is not the lack of security of tenure. But I say that theory is supported by fact when a comparison is instituted with other countries. It is undeniably the fact that in every prominent agricultural producing country at the present time—whether in the form of ownership or in the form of tenancy or any other form—the cultivators have complete security of tenure.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Are there cases of other forms?

Mr. SINCLAIR: Yes, there are other forms in Denmark, there are other forms nearer home in many parts of England. I will refer the right hon. Gentleman to Evesham where the most successful system of cultivation has been developed.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not want to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but I thought he was speaking of foreign countries.

Mr. SINCLAIR: So I was, and I can point the right hon. Gentleman to France and Denmark where facilities are given for security of tenancy, although they may not be the same things which we propose by this Bill. In foreign countries they do give security of tenure. But let the right hon. Gentleman look nearer home. Let him look in England where in various parts he will find a tenant-right system, say in Essex. Let him go to Ireland; I am not afraid to go to Ireland for support for our scheme. The most successful part of Ireland from the agricultural point of view is the North of Ireland, where there exists a system of tenancy very comparable with the tenancy which we establish under this Bill. The value of security of tenure is that upon that foundation small cultivators have built up a fabric of education, of organisation, and of co-operation which are the only conditions under which the business of small farming can prosper, and be carried on successfully at the present time. We all know the improvements brought about in Scotland by the Crofters Act. And, as the right hon. Gentleman has suggested, security of tenure has been given in other ways. It has been given by purchase in Ireland, but I will not trouble the House about purchase at any length, and it is obvious to those who have studied this question that purchase does not settle the question. When you have established your scheme of purchase, when you have handed to your peasant proprietor his land, whether it is a small or a large plot, you do not settle this question, because it becomes his absolute property, and it is open to him to sell, mortgage, or get rid of his land, or subdivide it.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: No, no.

MR. SINCLAIR: The right hon. Gentleman I know differs from us on that point, and thinks he has provisions which will guard against those contingencies, but they exist in Ireland, under the measures of the late Government; therefore I would remind the House that these difficulties have still to be met even if you do establish a system of purchase. This Bill places no obstacle in the way of the sale of land to purchasers who wish to become small holders. It leaves to the county councils their present powers under the Act of 1892. As I have said before in this House on this subject, I believe that there is in Scotland a limited demand for purchase of land for small holdings for special purposes, and that demand I think is well within the capacity of private effort to satisfy, and nothing in this Bill interferes with the progress of the satisfaction of that demand. But there is no evidence whatever of a general demand for purchase in Scotland by people who are likely to become small holders. Landlords may be willing enough to sell in some cases, especially to the Government or to any public authority, but it is too large a speculation for the small man and it requires four times at least the capital to purchase as it does to become the tenant of a holding, and these men will not entertain it for the very good reason that they cannot afford to do so. Let the small man by tenancy get his foot on the first rung of the ladder, and you can leave purchase and the rest to be undertaken by him in good time. Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley that the Committee of 1890, though they reported in favour of purchase, did so in a great measure against the weight of evidence given in that Committee. Out of eighteen witnesses examined by that Committee, eleven declared in favour of tenancy, and it was the influence we are combatting now, the influence of the owners of the land, which induced that Committee to report in favour of purchase. We all know the result of that Act. Even in England it has not been of very great effect, while in Scotland there has only been one instance of land being taken under it. What is the method of giving security of tenure which is adopted by this Bill? The Bill gives security of tenure under statutory conditions at a fair rent fixed by a Land Court, to all existing small holders of a rent of £50 or under, or alternatively, holding 50 acres or less. At the opening of my remarks I ventured to remind the House that the problem to be solved in Scotland was more complex than the kindred problem in England. Let me draw their attention now to the difference of method of this Bill. We think that to spend Government money in the creation and equipment of new small holdings in Scotland, without doing anything to prevent the tendencies which are bringing about the absorption of existing small holdings, would be an unjustifiable use of public money. These small holdings are the subject of agreement between landowner and tenant which may be presumed to be satisfactory to both. They have survived their difficulties, which are not economic, but due to the fact that imperfect land laws have hitherto denied to them the security of tenure essential to their permanent existence and development. Scattered through Scotland as they are in twos and threes, and often groups of larger numbers, they are an invaluable nucleus and foundation for the organisation and co-operation without which they and the new small holdings which may be added to them cannot prosper. Their existence is imperilled in our view, by the absence of security of tenure, and therefore the first step taken by this Bill is to place them under that condition. We have adopted the statutory conditions slightly amended of the Crofters Acts and applied those conditions throughout

Scotland, replacing the Crofters Commission by a Land Court having jurisdiction throughout Scotland. The Congested Districts Board is abolished and succeeded by Commissioners of Agriculture for Scotland. It is obvious that the granting of fixity of tenure at a fair rent to existing small holders is the mainspring of the objections to the Bill, and I have been severely censured for my supposed unwillingness to accept Amendments to the Bill. I do not think that accusation can be made good. There are two classes of Amendments. There are Amendments which are openly intended to destroy. This Bill, founded as it is on the principle of security of tenure, from which naturally flows a fair rent, under an authority to fix the fair rent, does not admit of the consideration of Amendments obviously intended to destroy the principle. There is another class of Amendment. The Amendment intended to correct errors, to facilitate smooth working, to extend, if you like, in some respect the operation of the Bill or to restrict it. These Amendments have been freely considered by the Government, who have always been willing and are willing still—willing and anxious—to consider all proposals and suggestions that are made with that view. Nobody can deny that fixity of tenure must imply an impartial independent authority to fix a fair rent, no matter by what name that authority is called. Undoubtedly, that is the central principle of the Bill, and if security of tenure is to be given, if some rent-fixing tribunal is to be set up, in the opinion of the Government the Land Court proposed in the Bill is likely to be the best, most expert, capable, and impartial, and cheapest tribunal which can be obtained. It is not a Land Court upon the Irish model. Its powers and duties differ in most important respects from the Irish example, and so does the Statute which it will have to administer. It is a system of which we have had trial and successful trial in Scotland in small holdings. One other point I would mention in regard to this security of tenancy in regard to existing small holdings. Our desire is to give this security of tenure with the minimum of interference with the present system of tenancy. For this purpose, while a small holder cannot be deprived of his right of fixity of tenure, he is under the Bill at liberty to enter into an agreement as to rent for a term of years, which agreement is binding upon him as long as it lasts, and suspends the exercise by him of the right to a fair rent fixed by the Land Court. There are some other objections upon which I should like to say a word or two. The impartiality and competence of the Land Court is questioned. Such criticism is either directed against the Government which appoints the Land Court, or against the possible conduct of public officials and servants in Scotland. I say without reserve that I will be no party to the appointment of what can fairly be characterised as a partisan Court, and I know no member of the Government who would. Further, I have complete confidence that those who are appointed will be guided, by the sense of public duty and responsibility proper to their judicial or *quasi*-judicial functions. But apart from the question of the authority, apart from the machinery, this proceeding of giving security of tenure to the existing tenants is strongly opposed, and by nobody more strongly than by the Leader of the Opposition. In a speech at Glasgow recently he described it as confiscation, not only of the land, but of the landlord's capital in the land. Now confiscation is a hard word and a plain word in its meaning, though it is often used somewhat recklessly in political controversy, and I cannot reconcile the plain meaning of the word with what is proposed in the Bill. Here is the position. The nation is losing its country population and threatened by symptoms of physical deterioration, and yet having to do its utmost to maintain the physique of its people for their own sake, to compete with other nations, to maintain our industrial efficiency and to man the Army and the Navy. Was there ever a set of circumstances which more amply justified the interference of the State, and surely it is too late to contend that the State under no circumstances is justified in interfering in the relations between landlord and tenant. What are all our factory laws, sanitary laws, public health laws but interferences of a similar kind? And even in regard to the use of land for railways, for housing schemes and for other public improvements, Parliament has interfered to enable the public interests to override the private interests concerned. Here is a great public purpose if there ever was one, where the public interest is at stake, and in this Bill there is I believe the minimum of interference necessary to achieve the end in view. The land remains the property of the landlord, to sell, to bequeath, or to mortgage. He retains his mineral, his timber, and his sporting rights. He is to get a fair rent for it, equipped as it is, and a fair rent for his capital. His capital and his improvements are protected by statutory conditions which he can enforce and which the Land Court is bound to help him to enforce. If any other statutory conditions can be suggested, which do not interfere with the sense of security of tenure of the tenant, we shall be very willing to consider them. All that is done by this Bill is done now by a good landlord—and I am far from making any accusation against landlords as a class, when I say that it is the system, the law, that is at fault and of which we complain, and which we now propose to amend, and not landlords personally. But there are landlords who are not good landlords. There are landlords who are poor landlords and cannot afford to lay out money on their property. There are landlords who are represented by factors. There are trustees who are landlords, and the upshot of the system as a whole is that we have come to the present pass, and a remedy is urgently called for. Another argument which is put forward by landlords is that legislation of this kind will disturb the existing relations between landlord and tenant. No doubt it will alter those relations, but I believe that it will alter them for the better. Recently some gentlemen visited some of the crofter districts, and subsequently recorded their opinion of the working of the Crofters Act, and they say that—

> "The chief good effect of the Crofters Act has been to give the crofters complete independence and full security for fair rents and for improvements made in their houses and holdings. It is scarcely open to doubt that the sense of security which has been created has mitigated the agrarian difficulties which existed before the passing of the Act. The Acts have also encouraged the crofters to improve their houses, in so far as they had the means and desire to do so, since they are now protected against the risk of losing the advantage of their improvements."

That is the evidence of witnesses by no means friendly to this Bill, as having been the result and effect of crofter legislation. No doubt the landowner does lose some of his arbitrary rights. That is true; but in any walk of life is the arbitrary power of one man over another likely to foster good relations between them? I say that the restraint of such arbitrary power and the giving to men of a sense of independence, is likely to increase their sense of justice and equality and fair play which is the salt and strength of the British nation. There will in future, it is urged again, be no landlords' expenditure upon these small holdings. I am not in the least alarmed on that score. In the first place, this Government has come forward to enable landlords to overcome what has been the obstacle to the creation of small holdings, viz., the cost of equipment, and the Bill provides for loans to new holders for the erection of their houses and their buildings. In the second place, let me remind you that the tenant of existing as well as new holdings is free to enter into agreements as to rent. This opens the door to the landlord if he is still willing to maintain the old relationship and his former responsibilities towards the holding; for an agreement as to rent obviously may include a *quid pro quo* in the shape of money provided for buildings or for some other improvement; and therefore, if the small holders cannot get on without the landlords' capital the Bill provides the opportunity for the landlords to come forward and help in this way. Thirdly, let me remind the House that the experience of the crofter system has shown that in these remote and unfertile regions tenants will come forward and expend their own capital to improve their own homes where landlords' capital has not in many cases been forthcoming. Fourthly, let me call the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the prosperity of agriculture in other countries—say Canada and Denmark—does not rest upon landlords' capital.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: They are all landowners.

MR. SINCLAIR: It depends upon the tenants themselves. In these countries it does not depend upon the landowners' capital; that is to say, the capital of wealthy men who can afford to own land. It depends upon themselves.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: They are owners.

MR. SINCLAIR: The right hon. Gentleman sees purchase in everything, but I wish to point out that once you give security of tenure you provide a foundation for the use of credit, for the employment of co-operation, for the establishment of land banks and the development of agricultural organisation for which there is no firm basis at present, and which will go far to fill the gap, if there is any gap left by the absence of landlord's capital. Another objection is entertained by some farmers who apprehend that their farms, or a part of them, may at any time be taken for the creation of new holdings. This point was raised in Committee, and words were inserted to safeguard the interests of farms under close cultivation. I believe the provisions of the Bill as it stands will meet that difficulty, and the real check upon the Agricultural Commissioners in regard to any rash proceedings of this kind is the money compensation which they will be obliged to pay. If any further suggestions can be put forward which will meet those apprehensions we shall be glad to consider them and to insert any other reasonable precautions which do not interfere with the working of the Bill. It is repeatedly urged that Scottish opinion is against us, and Bills have repeatedly been introduced in another place formulating a rival policy. It is something at any rate for us to have achieved that and brought hon. Gentlemen opposite to the point of embodying their policy in measures after an interval of fifteen years, and thus admitting the necessity of legislation. But let me point out that it was not until after the English Bill of the present Government was introduced that they found salvation. I need not describe these rival Bills which embody the criticisms which were made on this Bill in another place last year. I should like to point out one or two difficulties which they present. In the first place, their policy takes two Bills instead of one. The first amends the Crofters Act, confines it to the crofters area and amalgamates the Congested Districts Board with the Crofters Commission, that is to say amalgamates an administrative body with a *quasi*-judicial authority which is at present subject to no appeal. The second Bill adapts the clauses of the English Bill of last session, or attempts to adapt them, to Scottish circumstances. I think there are grave and fatal objections on their merits to the policy embodied in these Bills. Examine the notion of employing county councils for this purpose in Scotland. Look at the cost in the first place of making every county council in Scotland a landowner. buying and selling land, with an office in every county where at present there is no staff for the purpose. Look at the initial cost of such a system. County councils in Scotland are not representative bodies.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Question.

MR. SINCLAIR: I doubt whether they ever can be representative in the full sense, I am not making any accusation against the county councils or their members. I ask the hon. Gentleman to look at the map of Scotland. He will find not only in the Highlands but in the Lowlands to a far larger extent than in England, that in every county there is a remote inaccessible district not traversed by railways, or any means of rapid communication, and the result is that members of county councils inevitably find it extremely difficult to attend, to sacrifice the time and the money, to give up a day or two days to attend meetings. That is a physical and I think for some time to come an insuperable difficulty to county councils in Scotland being so thoroughly representative as they are in England and I think it is an insuperable obstacle to their ever undertaking business which requires frequent attendance at the county council. Then take another point. Scotch counties are much poorer than English counties. Scotland has about half the area of England. It has only one-sixth of the population. Take the counties of Northumberland and Berwick. You will find that Berwick has three-quarters of the acreage of Northumberland. Northumberland has ten times the population of Berwick and seven times the valuation, excluding the towns. Many of the Scottish counties are a great deal poorer than English counties and, therefore, are less likely to be able to afford to embark on this business of creating small holdings, whether by purchase or in any other way. They are much more likely to be timid and cautious, and very properly so. There is another reason which would contribute to their caution. They are largely manned by owners of land. The rates in Scotland fall on the owners and the occupiers. In England they fall almost entirely upon the occupiers. After all, I think this is a burden which would more properly fall on taxes than on rates. It is likely to be very unequal as falling upon different counties, and it will have to come to that in the end. Then again, in Scotland we are not accustomed, as hon. Gentlemen opposite know, to overriding one authority by another. Then look at the duplication of authority. In the Highlands you are to have the Crofters Commission creating and enlarging holdings and doing all the work of the Board of Agriculture for the crofters, the crofters looking to them for the protection of their rights and to fix a fair rent. In the same counties you are to have county and parish councils creating small holders and allotment holders subject to being overridden by a branch board in Edinburgh, and that branch subject to the authority of the Department of Agriculture in London. Any scheme more likely to lead to extravagance and confusion I cannot imagine. I do not think the Government could have dared to propose it. On their merits, therefore, there would be great difficulty in inducing the people of Scotland to believe that these are practicable alternatives to our proposal. To what extent are they supported? Lord Balfour of Burleigh made a long speech in the House of Lords criticising the Government Bill. He said he thought it was an honest Bill, and I thank him for that admission. But he did not say one word in favour of committing these powers to county councils. Lord Rosebery also made a speech on that occasion. He was a Member of the Government that passed the Crofters Act, and was Prime Minister when Sir George Trevelyan brought forward his Bill about extending the Crofters Act to eight additional counties. The Bill never passed. It was never even discussed in Committee, but it was always understood in Scotland as providing a real and effective extension of the Crofters Act, and if it had been on examination shown to be anything short of that it would never have been accepted as meeting what was then the demand of Scotland in that regard. Lord Rosebery, so far as I can understand, and I hope I do him no injustice, now opposes the extension of the area of the Crofters Act and supports the application of the English Act to the rest of Scotland. I am not sure of this. There is room for doubt, because recently in Glasgow he declared himself in favour of purchase. That is another alternative. He denounced the machinery of this Bill for the establishment of Agricultural Commissioners and a Land Court as savouring of an Edinburgh job and as an insult to county councils. If there is offence to Scottish sentiments, where is the greater offence—in the Government Bill which leaves the county councils their present powers without interference and without being overridden, and establishes the machinery of this Bill with a Scottish Agricultural Department, or in the English Bill which establishes in Scotland simply a branch of the English Board, which cannot help being a predominantly English Board, which can do nothing without the authority of that Board, and gives to the Board and also to its subordinate branch in Edinburgh power to override the county councils, and I believe the parish councils, and march into every county and parish in Scotland for the purpose? Let me say a word then about the opinion in the House of Commons. During the debates in this House the Opposition gave no indication whatever of having found salvation until after the introduction of the Government's English Bill, except that on one occasion during the debates the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition declared himself in favour of a purchase scheme. But the Opposition has, I am sorry to say, been strongly fortified in their work on this occasion by my hon. friend the Member for Leith Burghs. What is his position in regard to this Bill? The other night he declared the Bill to be, in his opinion, unamendable—so bad that nothing could possibly make it a measure worth passing into law. That was not always his opinion. When the Bill was first introduced into this House he gave it a hearty support, subsequently, I admit, explaining that he gave that support under a misapprehension which was cleared up a few days later. But in supporting the Bill he made some general statements which I think I may fairly quote as indicating that he has come to his present position gradually. He said—

> "When they came to extend the crofting area, there was nothing for it except the inclusion of the whole of Scotland. That was inevitable. They might dispute as to the exact kind of protection to be given to the small tenant within the crofting area and outside of it, but whatever they did beyond the crofting area must necessarily extend to the whole of Scotland."

And as bearing on the subject of county councils, let me quote this from the same speech—

> "Local authorities were really of no use in dealing with the subject of allotments or small holdings."

My hon. friend may object to my quoting the passages which I have just read, as having been uttered before he saw the Bill in print, but some time after he had seen the Bill in print he again spoke on the subject, at the meeting of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture in Edinburgh, on 10th October, 1906, and let me quote from what he then said—

> "In regard to the Bill, I speak as one who is in favour of its main provisions. I believe in a Land Commission, I do not think the county councils are of much use in such a matter. I believe in the £50 holdings; I believe in applying the Bill to the whole of Scotland, and I believe in a separate Board of Agriculture for Scotland."

These are general observations which I find it very difficult to reconcile with the position which my hon. friend has taken up in regard to the Bill, and which I greatly regret. Then take the indications of public opinion outside Parliament. The Party to which I have the honour to belong has consistently advocated the amendment of the Crofters Act, and its extension to the eight additional counties included in the 1895 Bill has long been the official policy of the Party. What of the Unionist Party? They, I assume, are now in the position of opposing all extension of the area of the Crofters Act. In the eight additional counties of the Trevelyan Bill, one after another of their candidates, successful or unsuccessful, from 1892 to the present time, has declared himself in favour of the extension of the Crofters Act and its application to those counties. Then take the opinion of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture. Their attitude has varied. The first occasion on which they considered this Bill was at the conference which I have mentioned, on 10th October, 1906. Their resolution on that occasion was not condemnatory of the Bill, but expressed the opinion that full information should be obtained before legislation is introduced further, and that the conference was opposed to the provision in the Small Landholders Bill by which it is proposed to establish a system of dual ownership in Scotland. Down to this present time they have not said one word in favour of adopting the county council as the authority for such legislation. I want now to correct one or two misapprehensions about the Bill, and then I will sit down. It has been stated in regard to the Agricultural Commission we wish to establish that the expenses of that Department will fall upon and, *pro tanto*, diminish the fund of £100,000 set aside under the Bill for the purpose of creating small holdings. That is not the case, because the expenses of that Department will be defrayed by the Votes. Therefore, there is no limit, except the limit imposed by Parliament and the Treasury, to such expenditure, and there is no obstacle in the way of giving Scotland as well an equipped Department as any other Department discharging similar duties. It is intended that this Department shall be well equipped, and that it shall be an efficient servant of Scottish agriculture. Let me say one or two words about another misapprehension concerning the exclusion of Canadian cattle. I may point out that that is not a matter which falls within the province of the Agricultural Department at all, because it has been determined by statute. We have argued this matter repeatedly and nobody has taken greater interest in it than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, who has strenuously opposed the establishment of a separate Board of Agriculture for Scotland. He said on 23rd October, 1895, when he paid his first visit to Scotland as President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries—

> "If you are going to break up your Department, do not make two bites of a cherry. Take hold of your nettle, and do not mince matters. If you are not satisfied with the Agricultural Department, do not be content wish asking that which would be of no use to you at all, a man in Edinburgh who would be subordinate to the Minister in London, who could give no answer without communicating with the Minister, and who could afford no information which you could not get yourselves by writing a note."

I submit this Bill again with confidence to the House because, in my judgment, it stands as the only scheme which fits the facts of the case. No doubt there will be plenty of opportunities for us to examine the rival Bill, but in my judgment no practical alternative has yet been suggested. The opposition to the Bill is, in essence, a political opposition, and those who are leading it are, with exceptions, those who oppose the Government not on this count only but on all counts. They are chiefly owners of land in Scotland, against whom personally I have no feeling of hostility whatever; but they have openly scorned and resented the authority of the promoters of this Bill to deal with this subject. We pretend to no special authority whatever. Our authority comes from the support of this House which has been so emphatic and it is this House which speaks for the people. It has never been admitted that landowners or any class of men are the best judges or should be the sole judges in their own case. Landowners not less than any other class desired to be fair to others, but I suggest with all humility that it is true that landowners, from the very nature of the case, are not in sympathy with the feelings of the tenants or farm servants. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why not?] Because they have never been tenants or farm servants, and it is the hardest thing for anyone to understand another man's point of view, especially when we are in business relations with that man. We are confident that in putting forward this Bill we have the support of a large number of the farmers of Scotland. ["No."] I have had as good an opportunity as other hon. Members of ascertaining public opinion upon this Bill, and I am giving my individual opinion for what it is worth. I say that this measure has the support of a large number of farmers, who have as good a right to their opinion as other men. There is no doubt whatever that the opinion of the mass of the people is that this Bill opens a career to the men working on the land. It will give them incentive to thrift and industry, and strengthen the character of the people as a whole. I trust that this Bill will be honestly and fairly considered. The Government are willing and anxious to consider amendments and changes which may be suggested. [AN HON. MEMBER: There is no time.] There will be opportunities offered to the opponents of this Bill to suggest Amendments. ["Where?"] In another place. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh!"] My own opinion is that it would be a reckless course of conduct to refuse without further consideration to pass this measure because that would put a stop to the progress of this branch of farming in Scotland; you would be making it known that there is to be no greater security of tenure to farmers, and denying to Scotland what I believe her people really want. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) in moving the following Amendment, "That this House whilst desirous of increasing the number of small owners and occupiers in Scotland wherever they are likely to prosper, declines to proceed with a Bill which establishes in the Lowlands of Scotland a system of land tenure alien to the traditions of the people and utterly unsuited to the conditions of agriculture," said the Secretary for Scotland began his speech by asking why did the Government proceed with this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman had occupied sixty-five minutes in explaining why the Government had proceeded with the Bill, but the question remained a riddle still. The right hon. Gentleman had only left the House two hours and three-quarters, and it was a little too much to hear a democratic Minister say, in effect: It does not matter what you discuss in this House, for the Bill will go to another place. They had some discussion last week on the question of the guillotine. But he would not deal with that now, because they had been told that minorities must suffer. Neither would he refer to that fruitful topic, the proceedings of the Grand Committee. They had left pleasing memories in his mind—memories of the courtesy, good nature, and kindness of his political opponents and a strong appreciation of the many good characteristics of the Scottish people. Those memories only strengthened his determination to prevent the infliction upon so charming a people of the misfortune of the passing of this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that fixity of tenure was the greatest thing in the world. He had told the House strange tales of how small men had succeeded because they had security of tenure, that there was no such thing in Scotland, and that the only way to get it was by passing this measure. He had made charges against landlords. True, he spoke in a moderate tone about them, and said they had arbitrary powers, were out of sympathy with their tenants, and could not understand the points of view of other people, and that therefore their powers should be curbed. He had charged some of his opponents with using language which pointed to confiscation. He (Mr. Lambton) objected to the Bill not only because of what it contained but because of the whole tone and spirit of it, and because the foundation of the Government's agrarian policy had been hostility to the landlords. When the Bill of last year was introduced, and again to-day, when reintroduced, the right hon. Gentleman described it as a great democratic measure. The right hon. Gentleman said that he and his friends were wedded to Liberal principles and Constitutional practices. That might be so, but he did not think he could congratulate them on their fidelity. There seemed to him to have been a great many lapses latterly. During the past two years they had been flirting with Socialism, and now they were flirting with anarchy. He maintained that half of the evils in the Bills proposed by the Government, and half of the faults of the measure now before the House, were due to the alliance made with the Socialist Party below the gangway.

MR. SINCLAIR indicated dissent.

MR. LAMBTON said that if the right hon. Gentleman objected to the word "alliance" he would withdraw the expression, and say they were the tools of Socialism. They had not heard in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman anything with regard to the purchase of land. Everybody knew that the Socialist Party objected to the purchase of land, and he believed the reason why the possibility of anyone becoming the owner of his holding had been denied in this measure was to be found in the opposition of hon. Members below the gangway. Hon. Members on that side of the House thought that a great mistake; they considered it desirable to increase the number of small owners as well as the number of small occupiers. He did not make this charge without authority. He could quote high authority. Last year before the introduction of the English and Scottish Bills speeches were made by the Prime Minister and the Under-Secretary for the Colonies. The Prime Minister speaking at a luncheon at the Holborn Restaurant attributed the depopulation of the rural districts to the fact that the labourers could not call their souls their own. [MINISTERIAL cheers.] That statement was cheered on the other side. He thought at the time that it was a slip of the tongue, or one of those things said to a too ignorant audience, and that it would not be repeated. But it was repeated to the Drury Lane audience by the Under-Secretary for the Colonies. That sort of charge was what produced hostility on that side to the measures of the Government. His opposition to these measures was because they were bad measures. He was not one of those people who cared which quarter measures came from. He looked at their merits and judged accordingly. He objected to the principle of legislation of this kind. There seemed to be a desire to do something uncomfortable to the landlords. The Government must remember that they were trying to ride three horses at once in this matter. He dared say that the English Land Act was an excellent measure. Hon. Members opposite said it was a great triumph of legislation, but they would on no account apply it to Scotland. They were going to spend £65,000 a year to establish in Scotland a system which they were to spend about £100,000,000 in getting rid of in Ireland. He would not venture to speak on this particular subject had he not some knowledge of the conditions in the Lowlands of Scotland. He could not see why the Lowlands of Scotland should not be treated in the same way as England. He had been for fifty years on the border of Scotland. He did not think that hon. Members in going through the counties of Roxburgh and Berwick would know whether they were on Scottish or English soil, for the conditions were practically the same in regard to flocks and herds, farms and farm buildings. [AN HON. MEMBER: The laws are different.] He did not think that was a relevant interruption. The conditions being practically the same, why could not legislation suitable for England be extended to that part of Scotland? He had never yet heard a feasible argument against it. He knew that there was one put forward by the Prime Minister last autumn, but he did not think it was a good one. The right hon. Gentleman told an audience in Scotland that Scotland must have this Bill because the Tweed was not dry yet. That was a physical fact which could not be denied. He thought the Prime Minister was wise in making that statement, because it could not be contradicted. Supposing the Welsh Members became a little restive in regard to the Welsh Disestablishment Bill all the Prime Minister had to say was that Snowdon was not yet flat. Last year when it was broadly stated that there was lawlessness in Ireland, that the Government had ceased to exercise the right to govern and had handed over its power to the Irish League, all that the Attorney-General for Ireland had to say was that there was still salt water in St. George's Channel. These geographical reasons were not good reasons. The right hon. Gentleman objected to purchase in Scotland. Why did he object to give to the loyal Scottish what the Government were so anxious to give to the Irish? Dual ownership was established in Ireland. It was proposed to establish in Scotland what existed in Ireland. They knew that in Ireland people were only too anxious to own their land. Was the right hon. Gentleman quite sure that in establishing that system in Scotland there would not be brought about the evils which had attended the system in Ireland? What example was the Government going to give people in Scotland to be patient under this Bill, and to hold their land until they obtained that which the Government had promised them—this elysium in the shape of security of tenure? There was only to be £65,000 advanced for this purpose. Many people might become impatient. Were they to be allowed to break the law and to render the lives of others insupportable because the right hon. Gentleman could not give them what they desired? To apply the Irish system to Scotland would be fraught with danger. There were many objections to the Scottish Bill of last year. In the first place, it was a Bill to legislate by reference, and all authorities would agree that there was no worse way. It was proposed to apply the Crofters Act throughout Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted some remarks from a Report pointing out how the crofters had benefited by having security of tenure given to them. It was obvious from the fact that the crofters had benefited that they deserved the Act. He did not think anybody objected to the passing of the Crofters Act, or similar legislation, for the crofters had made their own improvements and built their own houses. The crofting districts were in an entirely different position in that respect from the rest of Scotland. The quotation read by the right hon. Gentleman applied solely to the persons living under crofter conditions. If the right hon. Gentleman had read another portion of the Report he would have seen that the Commission reported quite the opposite in regard to the Lowlands. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to point out a single case in which these conditions existed in the Lowlands. He had never been able to get the right hon. Gentlemen, or any of the people who advised the Government in Scotland, to point out any specific case in which a tenant in the Lowlands had made his own improvements, and yet the Crofters Act was to be extended all over Scotland, although the conditions were different. In the Amendment he said that the Bill proposed to establish in the Lowlands of Scotland "a system of land tenure alien to the traditions of the people and utterly unsuited to the conditions of agriculture." Although the Crofters Act did justice to the tenants, it had not produced a satisfactory state of agriculture in the Highlands. Evidence went to show that although the houses might in certain instances be improvements they were not suitable habitations from a sanitary point of view for other parts of Scotland. Yet the right hon. Gentleman pointed to the Congested Districts Board as a panacea for the rest of Scotland. Being a Scotsman himself the right hon. Gentleman should recognise that the agriculture of Scotland was the highest form of agriculture in the world, and yet he came down to the House and said that the system of land tenure in Scotland had been an absolute failure.

Mr. SINCLAIR: What I said was that the system, whatever its merits, was fatal to keeping people on the land.

Mr. LAMBTON said the right hon. Gentleman stated that that was the fault of the system. The evidence given before the Commission said that depopulation in the crofter districts had been as great as in the other parts of the country. Therefore, according to the right hon. Gentleman's own showing, although the crofters had security of tenure the decrease of population in those districts was as great as in other parts of Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that it was not the English land system that accounted for depopulation. It was going on in the other countries of Europe, and even in Canada the same thing was taking place. People were leaving the land for the towns, and they all recognised that it was a great evil. It was a fallacy to say that it was the fault of the English land system. The right hon. Gentleman had not referred to the very important question of rates. In the crofting districts no rates were paid in respect of the buildings on the holdings. Did he mean to apply that exemption to the rest of Scotland? If he did, it would be a great hardship to the holders of property in the other districts. The right hon. Gentleman was very proud of the constitution of the Land Court, believing that it would be of great advantage to small landholders. But he and his friends on that side of the House objected altogether to a Land Court for fixing rents and deciding the compensation to be paid. Why should the relations of landlord and tenant be decided by a Land Court? The provisions for the constitution of the Land Court were of the most arbitrary description he had ever heard of. Then the right hon. Gentleman said that there ought to be an Agricultural Commission set up for Scotland. The constitution of such a Commission might be a very good thing in the right hon. Gentleman's eyes, but it was not, in his (Mr. Lambton's) opinion, necessary. The existing Agricultural Commission in England might do all the work required of it in Scotland perfectly well. There was no necessity for a new Agricultural Commission for Scotland—it would involve two sets of authority and two sets of rules and conditions, which would prove most tiresome to both farmers and merchants. Those who attended great agricultural markets like Berwick-on-Tweed and Carlisle were not to know under what conditions their transactions were being conducted. The necessity for this Bill had never been shown, and there was no reason why the English Small Holdings Act should not be made applicable to Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman had said that poor men were not represented on the county councils of Scotland; but he thought that the Scottish of the rural districts were men of independence. At any rate, the same conditions existed in England, and any difficulties that might arise were being got over every day. The county councils in Scotland were being granted by this Bill extensive powers with which they should not be entrusted. The right hon.

Gentleman had made the extraordinary statement that Scotland was a poor country, and that the small landholders should be enabled to equip and furnish their holdings. But why should the cost be placed on the rates in England, and in Scotland on the taxes? That was perfectly unjustifiable. They had not yet Home Rule in Scotland, and if there was going to be a great new system of land tenure for that country passed by the House, they ought to see that the financial conditions were equal to those that existed in England: that what came out of the taxes in England should come out of the taxes in Scotland, and what came out of the rates in England should come out of the rates in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that Scotland was a poor country, and that they were unable to look after their own affairs.

MR. SINCLAIR: No.

MR. LAMBTON said that the right hon. Gentleman told the House that the county councils were not representative. What then were the people of Scotland doing? The hon. and learned Member for South Edinburgh had told them that the people of Scotland had made up their minds in regard to a reform of the county councils.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) said that what he had stated was that there were large counties in Scotland from many parts of which the meeting places of the county councils, were inaccessible, and that therefore these could not be represented by poor men. It sometimes took a three days journey to get to the capital town of the county.

MR. LAMBTON said that the Secretary for Scotland had declared that the people could not look after their own affairs; and now that was whittled down by the hon. and learned Member for South Edinburgh to the statement that there were a few places in Scotland from which it cost a good deal of money to get to the meetings of the county council. When the debate took place in the other House—although he would prefer to have the discussions in the House of Commons—he hoped that the remarks of the Secretary for Scotland and of the hon. and learned Member for South Edinburgh would be remembered. There was no validity in the remarks of the hon. and learned Gentleman. He most seriously asked the House to pause before passing a measure such as this. There was no necessity for it. He was not one of those who declared that this was a measure which was never meant to pass; but he did not think that hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial Benches, although they wished it to pass, ever expected to pass it now. He believed that the reason why so many Members opposite thought well of it was because it was one of those which went to filling up the cup. He did not know how long their siege of the House of Lords was going to last. Frontal attacks were very dangerous, and so they were resorting to flank movements. The House of Lords would, however, take care of itself, and he did not think that this measure was of a sort that would shake its foundations. The Secretary for Scotland had said that he had got some support for the Bill from farmers in Scotland, but his own belief was that all the farmers with holdings of greater extent than fifty acres were opposed to it. They would have no security at all for their farms under its provisions. They might be taken from them and cut up into small holdings to-morrow. But it was not only the farmers who would be left insecure; the stewards, shepherds, and farm labourers would be in the same position. He knew something of the landlords of Scotland, and they would not embark their capital in new equipment for their farms; they would not build new houses for their stewards, shepherds, and labourers, and the Bill if it became law would lead to great distrust in the agricultural community. In the Lowlands of Scotland they knew what agriculture was. They did not farm patches of land and eke out a living by fishing. The stewards, shepherds, and farm servants in the Lowlands were, he ventured to say, better housed than any crofter in the Highlands, and their houses were erected and maintained at the expense of the landlords. He had known the landlords in the Lowlands all his life, and he was sure that it had never entered into their minds to oppress their tenants or farm labourers—very far from it. There had been political attacks upon the landlords, but he maintained that they had borne uncomplainingly the sufferings due to agricultural depression during the last forty or fifty years. The right hon. Gentleman had made attacks upon them for their shortcomings and the want of security of tenure which their tenants had, but he would point out that the rents had gone down from £60,000,000 to £40,000,000 during the last fifty years. Moreover, there was not a district in Scotland where more money had not been spent on improvements during the past twenty-five years than in any previous quarter of a century, and yet the return on the capital expended was very much smaller than formerly. The assertions that the landlords did not do their duty were unjust and were made to catch votes. He thought that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite had found out their mistake in that respect and that they should trust to the solid middle-class opinion of England. Honest men did not like such attacks as had been lately made on the landlords of the country. This Bill ought not to pass. If it would conduce to the interests of agriculture he would support it. The right hon. Gentleman's intentions, his hopes, and his auguries might be very good, but the Bill itself by which he proposed to carry them out was a hopeless mockery. He begged to move the Amendment standing in his name.

*Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said he was not one of those who thought for a moment that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Scotland had not a sincere desire to pass this Bill on its merits. He believed with his hon. friend who had just spoken that the right hon. Gentleman could not expect to fulfil that desire by proceeding to deal with the whole of Scotland in one measure instead of two. He happened to be in the unfortunate position of representing both the Highlands and the Lowlands, and he found on many occasions that he had to take the view of one section of his constituents on a particular measure and the view of the other section on another measure. But in this particular case he was inclined to think that both sections desired some kind of measure which would increase the number of small holdings in Scotland. However, the Lowland part of his constituents did not approve of the crofterisation of their agriculture; and when he fully explained his position to his constituents in Oban he found that they did not desire to be made a cat's paw of in order to crofterise the Lowlands, and that they had no desire to back up the right hon. Gentleman opposite in pressing the scheme of this Bill. He thought he was entitled to complain of the persistence with which the right hon. Gentleman unfairly presented the attitude of the Unionist party on the Crofter question. What had been the Unionist record in the past? Who had done most for the crofters? He frankly admitted that the Liberal Party had the credit of passing the Crofters Act of 1886. He gave them every credit for that, but they passed it with the general support of their political opponents, who in many respects desired to extend it beyond the principles on which it was founded. And the curious fact was that every shilling since voted in the interests of the crofters had been voted by the Unionists who, by the irony of fate, almost immediately after the Bill was passed into law, by the turn of the screw, came into power. Their first step was to pass an Act making a grant of £30,000 to the Scottish Fishery Board for the benefit of the poor fishermen crofters on the West Coast; and consistently from that time these Crofters Acts had been sympathetically and generously administered by the Unionists for 17 years. Lord Lothian appointed a Commission in 1889, of which Mr. Spencer Walpole was the chairman, to find a remedy for the destitution and discontent which then existed. That Commission reported in 1890, recommending railway extensions and grants for lines of steamers, piers, and harbours, to the immense advantage of the crofting population and the country as a whole. The Government passed the Highlands and Islands Works Act in 1891, under which no less than £200,000 was granted to and spent on the poorer parts of these districts in order to help them. In the course of time the Act was superseded by the Congested Districts Boards Act, under which £350,000 had been spent. During the whole of this period hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite were only in power for three years, from 1892 to 1895, during which time they did nothing whatever. He remembered that the hon. Member for Invernesshire resigned his seat as a protest against what he considered was the neglect of the crofting interest. He called attention to this because throughout the whole of the discussions that had taken place on this question not a single word of acknowledgment had fallen from the right hon. Gentlemen or the Lord-Advocate with regard to the services rendered by the Conservatives and the Unionist Party. As they could not get any acknowledgment from the Government for the credit they were entitled to demand, he claimed that credit now. They were anxious to continue their policy and help these people. The crofters were never in a more distressing condition than at present. Legislation had been too long delayed, and it would be delayed again if the right hon. gentleman persisted in his policy of making a condition of his scheme the crofterisation of the whole of Scotland. That was a price they could not pay and which they would not pay. It would deny to the crofter the legislation they should immediately receive. He vigorously protested against the right hon. Gentleman persisting to deal with the whole of Scotland under one scheme, instead of two.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out all the words after the word 'that' in order to insert the words 'this House, while desirous of increasing the number of small owners and occupiers in Scotland wherever they are likely to prosper, declines to proceed with a Bill which establishes in the Lowlands a system of land tenure alien to the traditions of the people and utterly unsuited to the conditions of agriculture.'"—(*Mr. Lambton.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire) said he would like to make it quite clear at the outset that he was deeply impressed with the gravity and danger of rural depopulation on the one hand, and the accompanying phenomenon of urban overcrowding on the other. In the recent discussions there had been an almost universal agreement as to the desirability of setting up small holdings in the abstract. But when it came to the concrete, the desirability was so overlaid with doubts and difficulties that the advocacy became mere lip service. The Bill in no way met the difficulties, and in so far as it ignored them it merely did paper service. But other countries which had similar difficulties had met them with success, and their success was a warrant for our proceeding on their lines. This Bill was dangerous in principle and defective in machinery. It was dangerous in principle because it set up dual ownership, which in Ireland had produced such disastrous effects. It was defective in machinery because it set up a permanent board divorced alike from popular control and all touch with local sentiment. What was required was a popularly elected body practically acquainted with the special circumstances of the particular districts, and above all outside the influence of red tape and routine. The Bill might be suitable to the Highlands, but it was unsuitable to the county which he had had the honour to represent in this House for fourteen years. He contended that it was unsuitable to the needs of Scotland because there was no analogy between the Highlands and the Lowlands. What sort of holdings were contemplated by this Bill? Many of its supporters appeared to think that ordinary extensive agriculture could be successfully pursued under its provisions. They were mistaken. In the Lowlands, and, in speaking of the Lowlands he desired to bind himself to Berwickshire, East and Mid Lothian, and any part of Roxburghshire, it was impossible to make fifty acres pay by ordinary extensive cultivation; a man with fifty acres could not compete with the large farmers. Fifty acres would not keep a pair of horses. He trembled to think what would happen to those poor men who tried to make fifty acres pay in such seasons as that which had just passed. These were not the days in which we could afford to get the second or third best out of the land. The productivity of the land must be stimulated to the utmost of its bent. They in Berwickshire were proud of their agriculture, which they believed to be the best or nearly the best in the whole world. Even if it were true that by extensive cultivation fifty acres could be made to pay, the only result would be that a farm servant would be taken from one farm and put into another. The population question remained untouched. All that this Bill would do would be to postpone his departure from the country for a few months or a few years, but he would enter the town with empty pockets, impoverished in hope, embittered in spirit, with nothing behind him but the memory of his failure. It had been urged "why criticise so closely, it is only a small measure and will have but a small range." Was this what Scotland wanted? This was not his conception of the needs of the country: the consideration of its needs led him to criticise the Bill from the point of view of its sins of omission. It contained no recognition of the experimental character of the proposal; no provision for teaching either by travelling instructors or technical instruction in the schools; no provision for the establishment of experimental plots such as had been so useful in other countries. France had 3,000 or 4,000 of these plots upon which experiments could be made by which the cultivators of the soil could tell what would pay, and to determine the class of agriculture which would profit the people on the land. Let them learn by the experience of other countries. What could they teach us? The staple products which came from abroad were butter to the extent of £22,000,000, cheese £6,900,000, eggs £7,100,000, poultry £903,000, and vegetables £3,700,000, of which potatoes and onions alone represented £2,371,000. The only way in which we could get hold of those markets was to spend money on training. The Belgian Minister for Agriculture in a message to Parliament said—

> "Every franc spent on agricultural teaching brings brilliant returns."

And the Dutch President of the Agricultural Council said—

> "Every guilder spent on the promotion of agricultural teaching brings back profit one hundredfold."

The greatest illustration of this was to be found in the case of Denmark. The British Vice-Consul at Copenhagen in 1860 said that Danish butter at that time was execrable. Now they exported to this country butter to the extent of £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 a year. The extraordinary progress which had been made in Denmark was entirely due to agricultural training. Having regard to the objectionable features of the Bill and all it omitted, how could he vote for it. If he were the Chief Secretary for Ireland he might say, "I won't," but being the humble individual he was he could only say, "I cannot." He advocated a policy of small holdings, and had his right hon. friend introduced a Bill for occupying ownership, differentiating between the Highlands and the Lowlands, and introducing a scheme of agricultural training and experimental plots and providing money for these purposes, and had placed the scheme on a democratic basis, abjuring bureaucracy, he would have laid up for himself treasure not only in the ballot boxes but in the hearts of the people.

*MR. MURRAY (Aberdeenshire, E.) said he could not agree with the last speaker for the reason that he had recently returned from his constituency, where he had spent November and December taking the opinion of his constituents on this Bill from early morning till late at night. He found that from one end to the other of East Aberdeenshire a great majority of the people were in its favour. At his first meeting, which was composed of crofters and farm servants, he was told when leaving, "Mr. Murray we could have sat and listened to you all night;" and at the last meeting he was told that all they wished to listen to in East Aberdeenshire was about this Land Bill. That showed the feeling in his constituency. It was always a pleasure to listen to the hon. Member for South East Durham who combined those two qualities so rare in a Scotsman, cynicism and chaff, but there were one or two points of the hon. Member's speech which he would like to refer to. The hon. Member asked why a Bill which was suited to Northumberland should not suit Berwickshire. He might as well have asked why the religion which suited Northumberland would not suit Berwickshire. For centuries England tried to make Scotsmen Anglican and did not succeed. Or it might be asked, Why would not the education that suited Northumberland suit Berwickshire? The answer was that the Scots were a totally different people, a different race with different traditions. One reason why this Bill pleased the great majority of Scotsmen was that it gave every man a chance to rise in life. Every man should have a chance, but at present the farm servant had no such opportunity. The Leader of the Opposition had said that if circumstances in Scotland were analogous to those of Ireland he would have no objection to this Bill being applied to the Lowlands of Scotland. He (Mr. Murray) could only say that he represented one of the largest Lowland constituencies in

Scotland, and that, if it had not been for the small holders, East Aberdeenshire would have been a howling wilderness. It was the small holder who had taken in almost every rood of land in Aberdeenshire. He spent night and day with his wife and children under every conceivable hardship and privation, reclaiming the soil from nature. And what was the reward which he received for his toil? He started with what was known as an improving lease—that meant that with great labour to himself and family he dug and trenched the land, he gathered the stones, he drained the land and fenced it with the stones gathered from the fields, he built his house and homestead, and at the end of his lease in nine cases out of ten his rent was raised long before he was able to recoup himself for the labour spent on the holding. They had frequently heard that the landlords of this country were a fair-minded race. No one had heard him saying they were not, but during his recent tour in East Aberdeenshire he was impressed by the fact that the sense of awe with which for centuries the peasantry regarded the landlord had not yet in many cases been stamped out. If it was difficult for an employer of labour to know what his employees thought of him, it was still more difficult for a landed proprietor to know what his tenants and the peasantry generally thought of him and those connected with him. He was struck also by the struggle for existence on the part, not only of the small landholders, but of many farmers of every description. This worried him very much, because it was forty years since he spent twelve months on his father's farm and there was then a great deal of prosperity in the neighbourhood. What did he find on looking into the facts? In 1860 this country ceased to produce sufficient mutton and beef for its own demands, and although supplies were imported from France, Germany, and Spain, they were insufficient to keep the prices down. Prices rose considerably, and in 1878 rents followed in the wake of high prices, and no embarrassment followed. In 1878 prices reached their highest, and since then had been gradually falling, until we were now where we were in 1860. The prices of cattle now were perhaps a little less than they were forty-seven years ago, and oats were 4s. a quarter less. Against this, the wages of farm servants had risen about 80 per cent., and rents, although they rose in sympathy with the high prices, had stopped in the decline half-way down, so that in Aberdeenshire the rent now was about 30 per cent. higher than in 1860. It had been contended that it was impossible for a farm of fifty acres in East Aberdeenshire to make a living, but it was equally impossible for a farm of 200 or 300 acres to do so. The bigger farm was producing exactly the same articles—oats and beef. He knew it was contended that certain things must be produced on a large scale at a profit whch on a small scale would entail a loss, but he contended that intensive cultivation on a small holding could produce what a large farm could not. Not only the Liberals, but many Tories also in his constituency were in favour of this Bill. The chairman of one of his meetings remarked to him—"Mr. Murray, we do not agree in politics, but I am thoroughly at one with you in your enthusiasm for this Bill." In regard to the disappearance of small holdings, he told the House that in forty-seven years the number in East Aberdeenshire had diminished to the extent of between one-fourth and one-third. That was a very serious condition of things, because, as everybody knew, the best farm and domestic servant that could be had was the child of a small holder. One question he put before his constituents was that of purchase. He did not advocate purchase because it took more money to become an owner than a tenant. A tenant could farm 100 acres with the capital he required to purchase a thirty-acre croft. It was perfectly true that the Duke of Fife, for reasons of his own, sold farms on a basis of twenty years purchase some years ago, and that, therefore, one or two of his (Mr. Murray's) friends favoured purchase. It was all very well for a wealthy landlord like the Duke of Fife to sell on such terms, but the average landlord in Aberdeenshire could not afford to do so, and would require thirty or forty years purchase. Therefore, he did not see that purchase was possible in his constituency. If the tenants got fair rent and fixity of tenure, although they did not get the dignity of a landed proprietor nor the responsibility they got all they wanted to make their business a success. For these reasons he wanted, speaking for East Aberdeenshire and a great many Tories as well as Liberals, to tell the Secretary for Scotland that they were almost unanimously in favour of the Bill.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said this was not this Bill's first time on earth and it would appear that those responsible for its successive reincarnations considered it of such merit that it was in their view entirely unnecessary to discuss in this House that considerable portion of the Bill which last year was passed under the guillotine. Having that view the Government apparently thought that the Bill had behind it a strong body of public opinion in Scotland. If that were so, which he begged leave to doubt, then it only remained for him to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman and the Government on having done what no previous Government had succeeded in doing. They had produced out of their inner consciousness about one-third of the very long Bill of last year in a form so perfect that no discussion in this House was required and no Amendment needed; in such a perfect form that it reflected the opinions and wishes of the whole of Scotland. That was a most laudable thing for any Government to do. It must be a matter of pride to the Lord-Advocate and the Solicitor-General to reflect that Clause 3 was produced in such a perfect shape that it required no discussion with regard to the principle of setting up a Land Committee in Scotland. The people of Scotland had no criticism to offer to that; all they desired was that the junior members of that august tribunal should receive an extra £200 a year. If that was the view they held he considered it flattering but incorrect, because if they took expert agricultural opinion it was hopelessly and overwhelmingly against the Government. To begin with, at the very inception of the Bill, the report for which the Bill did not wait —the Report of Lord Onslow's Small Holdings Committee—condemned in unmeasured terms the principle which was embodied in it, as also did the Secretary for Scotland's Danish Commission by eighteen votes out of twenty. The Douglas Commission, which had just inspected the working of the crofting system, had condemned the Bill. The Chamber of Agriculture had condemned it, not once, but repeatedly, and the Chamber of Agriculture was originally commended to them by the representative of the Board of Agriculture as a body of hard-headed Scottish farmers representing Scottish agricultural opinion; and more than that, the President of the Board of Agriculture took occasion in October, 1906, to make some remarks with regard to the limiting of landlords' contractural rights, and their power of negotiating incoming tenants, and said—

> "Such legislative regulation of the terms of contract is a first step in the direction of valued rents and a Land Court, and without saying whether these are good or bad I doubt whether the members of the Chamber are prepared to enter upon that step without much further consideration."

That further consideration was given and it was surely strange and worth more than passing comment that when the Chamber of Agriculture made up its mind that the Bill was not good but bad, the noble Lord who presided over the Department found it inconvenient and undesirable to go to Scotland and discuss the matter with those whom he had previously found so willing to meet. Even at the Perth Liberal Conference there was one prominent agriculturist who said they had raised against the Bill an almost solid mass of agricultural opinion. Then as to popular opinion, he did not know what opinions the farmers and farm servants of East Aberdeenshire expressed when under the spell of the hon. Member's eloquence, but he knew that a petition was presented to the House from the farmers and farm servants of Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire, and Banff, protesting against the terms of the Bill. It was signed by 2,573 farmers and 852 crofters, and 1,095 farm servants. The hon. Member's speech was a demonstration of the elasticity of the present system as regarded the constitution of small holdings. He said Aberdeenshire was accounted a small holdings county, but it was made a county of small holdings under existing conditions. He fancied the hon. Member for Argyllshire would hesitate to subscribe to the doctrine that the Government were infallible interpreters of Scottish public opinion or to the view that the action which the Government had taken with regard to arbitration, for instance, under the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1906, was an accurate reflex of public opinion and wishes. The

Secretary for Scotland had taken his stand once more upon the successful working of the Crofters Act in preventing depopulation. The difference of conditions in the crofting districts and the south of Scotland had been pointed out before and was admitted by those responsible for the original drafting of the Crofters Acts. But it was more than doubtful whether the Crofters Acts had proved such a success in stemming depopulation as the right hon. Gentleman would have them believe. The Douglas Commission Report was open to very considerable misconception. The members recorded their general conclusions with regard to the working of the Crofters Acts as follows:—

> "Our general conclusions as to the working of the Crofters Acts in the districts where they apply is that while they have made possibly considerable improvement in crofters' houses, given independence to the people, and in some cases stimulated improvement in farming, they have not in point of fact in the course of twenty-one years created a successful or prosperous agriculture. It may very well be the case that economic and other considerations make it impossible for any agrarian change to bring about those results in the crofting districts, but the fact remains that the crofting system as it exists at present furnishes no positive indication of its capacity to bring about agricultural prosperity. We have found no evidence that the Crofters Acts have served to arrest rural depopulation."

That extract gave a fairer idea of the general sense of the Report of the Committee than that read by the right hon. Gentleman. The Prime Minister had said little about the working of the Crofters Acts, but had said much about the effect of the growth of the small holdings system in North Wales in preventing rural depopulation. He understood that an error of something like 100 per cent. had been detected in his figures by one of his open followers, but taking them as they stood, as a matter of fact the proportion of small holdings in Wales and in Scotland at present was almost identical, and the Prime Minister's argument appeared to lack any logical sequence whatever. If small holdings had checked rural depopulation in Wales, one would have been expected to institute the same system in Scotland. The right. hon. Gentleman, however, proposed to introduce into Scotland an entirely different system. As a matter of fact with regard to the figures on the relation of rural depopulation and small holdings, one could only say that there was the greatest confusion and uncertainty. It was impossible to trace any real connection between one and the other. Over all Scotland in the period from 1891 to 1906 small holdings from five to fifty acres had increased on an average by 9 per cent. and rural population had decreased by 4·9 per cent. In the seven Crofting counties small holdings had increased by 19·7 per cent. on an average, and rural population had decreased by 6·4 per cent. In 13 of the counties there had been a decrease both in the number of small holdings and in rural population. The average decrease was 5·8 per cent. of small holdings and 8·8 per cent. in population. In only two counties had there been an increase in small holdings and in population, 9 per cent. and 3·2 per cent. respectivaly. In 18 counties the increases and decreases had not been in sympathy, but had been different one from the other. In four counties there had been a decrease in the number of small holdings and an increase in population, and in 14 counties it had been *vice versa*. Any attempt to draw a clear and definite argument from the figures was obviously not borne out by the facts. That was worth considering in regard to the cry of "Back to the land." That was not so much a political as an economic problem. If small cultivation could be made to pay plenty of people would seek and find opportunities of returning to the land, and he had always thought it was a curious inconsistency which had led gentlemen opposite to make the laying down of permanent pasture, which was certainly not a good means of decreasing the amount of rural depopulation, an improvement so great that it could be made without the landlord's consent and compensation be required from the landlord for making it. If they looked at the Bill from an economic point of view, the proposed limit of 50 acres was about as uneconomic as they could make it. In Roxburghshire and Berwickshire a very strong opinion had been expressed to him with regard to this uneconomic limit. The right hon. Gentleman had cited Blairgowrie and the Vale of Evesham, but they were not parallel cases. Surely the Government did not imagine they were going to have intensive cultivation all over Scotland. That was impossible, and they had to consider how small holdings could be worked under ordinary economic conditions. Intensive cultivation was an excellent thing, but the fact remained that small holdings must be worked under ordinary economic conditions, and the only way in which a successful result could be achieved was by co-operation and organisation. Clause 4 of the Bill contained a large number of provisions which the Agricultural Commissioners were to carry out. Those functions were all very well and good, but the Bill gave them no money to carry them out. The sum of £35,000 out of the £100,000 was ear-marked for the operations of the Congested Districts Board and the other £65,000 must go automatically towards the constitution of new holdings and the enlargement of holdings under the Crofters Act. All the talk about what was going to be done under Clause 4 meant nothing, because the Agricultural Commissioners were not to be given any money.

MR. SINCLAIR: Apparently the hon. Member did not hear my statement on this point. I stated that the cost of the work of the Board of Agriculture would be placed upon the Votes.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said he did not understand that the right hon. Gentleman's statement covered the point to which he alluded, and he did not follow the right hon. Gentleman's argument about the unrepresentative character of the county council. He said it would be a long way from some remote glen to a county town, but it would be a much longer distance to Edinburgh. Divided ownership had been referred to. He understood that the Secretary for Scotland had now ranged himself on the side of those who supported this measure because it did not contain the principle of divided ownership. He hoped that before the debate closed they might have an opportunity of understanding once and for all whether the Government had made up their minds that they were supporting the Bill because it contained dual ownership or because it did not contain dual ownership. He hoped the Lord Advocate would inform the House whether the Bill contained that principle and whether he agreed with the Lord Chancellor that it was being supported on that account. The only other argument was the suggestion that the Bill contained the germ of a great democratic principle. He doubted that suggestion, and he thought that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were present he would reflect if he looked at Clauses 16 and 17, because he would find that on the one hand the landlord was restrained from letting, and on the other the tenant was restrained from leaving, and he would begin to doubt how far liberty, not only upon its negative, but upon its positive side, was being secured. If judicial rents, crofting tenure, and a Land Court were essential parts of the democratic principle of Liberalism, what about the English Act? If those were essential principles he would like to hear from the First Commissioner of Works why it was that the English system was alien to the traditions of the people of the Lowlands, and why it was that the crofter system this Bill sought to introduce had none of the demerits which they alleged against it.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that one of the disadvantages of the debate was that they had had the Lord Chancellor telling them that the Bill contained dual ownership whilst the Solicitor-General assured them that it contained nothing of the kind. Then the First Lord of the Admiralty had told them that he preferred the county councils, and the Secretary for Scotland had told them that he did not. Under those circumstances it was small wonder if when on the introduction of the Bill he gave his support to the right hon. Gentleman on general principles, that indiscretion carried him somewhat further than he intended. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman of one or two points he had raised. First, in regard to the extension of the Crofters Act under Sir George Trevelyan's Bill. That Act was extended to adjacent counties and applied only to crofting parishes of those counties, and to very few of them. That was one of the reasons why he adopted that form of procedure, because he desired to carry out the principle that any further legislation should extend to the whole of Scotland. He never proposed that the

Crofter Commission should be abolished; on the contrary, he had argued that the Crofter Commission and the Congested Districts Board should be united. He had always advocated that local authorities should have large powers. Throughout the whole of this matter he had at any rate been consistent in this way, that he had advocated the extenison of any further legislation to the whole of Scotland. He had also advocated that tenants below £50 rent should have a valued rent, with precautions, however, against fixity of tenure. Regarding small farms as an experiment, he thought that experiment would be better conducted by a central authority than by a local authority. The main work of land reform, however, was to give free access to the land for the purpose of cultivation, and that matter would be best dealt with by local authorities. They had learned a good deal since the Bill was introduced. The English Bill had provided that central coercion or stimulus for the local authorities which was necessary to make them effective. The whole of the members of the County Councils of Sutherland and Caithness were turned out at the last election. Nobody would tell him that the local authorities in Scotland were less representative or more subservient to the landlords than the local authorities in England. To be told that Carlisle and Berwick were fit to take land and to administer it, and that Dumfries and Kelso were not, was really to state a proposition at which "the man o' independent mind looked and laughed." To be told that Northumberland was free while the Lothians were servile, and that the Agricultural Commissioners attached to the Board of Agriculture were for the landless in England and against the landless in Scotland was a preposterous statement. He maintained still that a central authority was more effective for making what he regarded as a most difficult experiment—the creation of small farms—an economic success. He thought the English Act had shown them the way, and that Act, although it was called the English Act, was based upon the evidence in and the Report of the inquiry which extended equally to Scotland and England. This Bill was hurried into the House while the Report was in the hands of the printers. Now they were told by the right hon. Gentleman that small farmers had to provide against difficulties which were not economic. The whole question was economic. Why had the large farmer thrown out the small one? It was because of the dealing in bulk, the greater freedom of the access to markets, and the use of machinery, and the only way in which they could restore the small farm to its former place was by providing a wider system of agricultural education, arranging for co-operation, and giving better access to markets. That would put the small farmer more on a level with the large one. The efficiency of the present agricultural system rested upon the owners' expenditure. Whether that was right or wrong was a matter on which opinions might differ, but they brought agriculture into ruin and chaos if they stopped that expenditure without making any alternative provision for it. There was another point which the Bill overlooked, and that was responsible management. It was not only the fact that the owners had provided over £1,00,000,000 worth of equipment which was withdrawn from the protection of the ordinary law, but they had to spend over £2,000,000 a year in the renewal of that equipment. They had also to find £250,000 a year for management in order to safeguard against waste. If they established occupying ownership as in Denmark, or gave free sale as in Ireland, there would be in the one case no need of responsible management, and in the other comparatively little need; but occupying ownership and free sale were tabooed by the Bill, and therefore they must retain responsible management unless there was to be in definite waste. The real question before them with regard to that matter in the Bill was the question of justice. It was not really the position of the owner that was before them. That was a secondary consideration. The real question was the position of agriculture under the Bill. The Bill would knock agriculture on the head in Scotland. He did not say it would do so for ever, because some way would be found out of the situation. The difficulty in regard to divided ownership in Scotland would be in a much more acute form than in Ireland, because they could not transfer the £100,000,000 worth from the owners to the occupiers. There would be a far more complicated divided ownership in Scotland, and there would be far more litigation. As a consequence there would be a deterioration in agriculture through the landlord's equipment to which the tenant had been accustomed being stopped. There would be litigation in the Courts, and finally they would have to have land purchase in Scotland also. The Government had to provide an alternative system for the one it was about to destroy, and it would have to find £2,000,000 for equipment, and £250,000 to meet the cost of its own factorship. It would also have to find equipment for the new holdings. Land purchase itself would not be a solution of the problem in Scotland any more than in Ireland. They would have to find £100,000,000 or more for land purchase, and they would have, according to the policy of the Government, to divide up a great proportion of grass and arable land to find new holdings, and all this at a time when they were faced with great expenditure in Ireland. Why the Government should court similar expenditure in Scotland without the slightest necessity was beyond his comprehension. It was because the carrying out of the proposal would mean chaos to existing agriculture that he was so staunch an opponent of the measure to-day, and would be until they got on to more rational lines.

*Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said that the mover of the Amendment had put forward the idea that this was a Socialist Bill, and h d further ventured the opinion that the Government had been forced to adopt Socialist principles because of the pressure brought to bear on them by himself and his colleagues on those benches. As a Socialist he wished a Socialist Bill. But he was afraid that they would have to disagree with the hon. Member. This was by no means a Socialist Bill, but one framed on the principle put forward a few weeks ago by, he thought, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, namely, social reform conditioned by individual enterprise. He had not the right hon. Gentleman's exact words, but they were to that effect. There was a sense in which this was a Socialist Bill; it embodied the principle of fair rent and fixity of tenure in substitution for rent fixed by the hard need of the occupier. It made a further Socialist Bill possible, because he thought it might reduce rents, and, therefore, make it easier later on to go a step further in the same direction. He need scarcely say that he committed nobody on the other side of the House when he gave expression to that opinion. He would like to associate himself fully with what had been said by the hon. Member for Berwickshire who spoke of the need for co-operation and education. He also thought there ought to be relief from the exorbitant railway rates so as to make it easier for the agricultural population to hold their own. This Bill was by no means final. It set up machinery whereby, so far as he could see, at all events co-operation would be easier in the future than it had been in the past. It set up commissioners who were specially charged with the duty of agricultural organisation, and, therefore, it was a step in the direction of achieving the object which the hon. Member had in view. The Secretary for Scotland had stated that he intended to press for more money. He thought, therefore, the hon. Member for Berwickshire might be encouraged to hope that the Bill would at no distant date achieve the object he and himself had in view. He had waded through the 467 columns of *Hansard* in which the proceedings in this House on the Bill were reported last session. The speeches of hon. Members who opposed the Bill occupied 283 columns, leaving only 184 for its defenders. He saw no reason to alter the opinion which he had held more or less ever since the Bill was introduced. He had given a somewhat qualified support to the Bill in all its stages in the House, but not because he believed that it was a final Bill. He wanted responsible ownership and responsible control. He wanted public ownership and control. The Bill was not an heroic one. It was not an ideal one. There were many defects. For instance, the resources were too small. He thought there was a general concensus of opinion that £65,000 would only have the effect of setting up 100 to 150 small holders in the year. That did not go far enough. He was against divided control. Another serious defect was that it did not help the labourers to get advantage of it. And, finally, he would like to see the £50 limit altered. It was too low. He believed that what was good for small farms was also good for larger ones. But he believed that the Bill within its limited scope gave effect to a principle which was calculated to transform Scottish agriculture, if only it was carried out to its logical conclusion. That was the principle of fixity of tenure. The result of his own energy, enterprise, and labour should be secured to the small holder. It stood to reason that a man who was working for himself, as it were, knowing that he was going to benefit in proportion if he worked hard and put skill and ardour into his work, was going to be more productive and therefore more beneficial not only to himself, but to the community, than the man who was liable to be turned adrift at any time by an arbitrary landlord. He was not speaking disrespectfully of the landlords of Scotland. As a result of fifty years experience he found that: "We are all pretty much of a muchness." But what he wanted to direct attention to was that there was an inequality between the parties making the bargain—between the poor and therefore dependent man on the one side and the rich landlord —at any rate, many of them were rich—on the other. There was no equality there. The bargain made, in the nature of things, must be an unfair one. Landlords made bargains as other people did, having regard to all the circumstances of the case; and the salient circumstance in this case was the poor man with whom the bargain had to be made. He heard the Secretary for Scotland allude last year to the disadvantages with which the State had to contend in making bargains with landlords. The State was always expected to buy dear and to sell cheap. But whatever these disadvantages were they were as dust in the balance compared with the disadvantages of the poor men in Scotland who had to compete one against another for the occupancy of those small farms, and therefore were charged a higher rent than they otherwise would be. He believed that the Bill, small as it was, was calculated to attract people to the country, or, if not, to stop the rural depopulation. So far as he understood the position, the chief argument he had heard against the Bill was one which might be applied to all the Bills having that as its end and object. It was put by the hon. Member for North-West Lanark when he said that the reasons why the people left the country had nothing to do with the Bill or the things that they had been discussing that day, but were economic in their character. That plea was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition last year, who speaking on the Bill said in reference to its bearing upon urban congestion—

> "However you are going to deal with the urban problem you do not diminish its gravity by increasing the number of rural inhabitants of the country. The effect is exactly the reverse."

And again, later on, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The more you increase the number of families engaged in agriculture the larger is the source—the birth-rate remaining the same—from which people will have to leave agriculture and to enter the towns."

The right hon. Gentleman had proceeded on to support that argument by comparing agriculture with engineering and cotton-spinning, and he said that agriculture being depressed, the people would leave it just as now people left engineering and cotton-spinning, and for the same reason. And the right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "That that had nothing to do with land tenure."

He submitted to the House that the conditions under which engineering manufacturing and cotton-spinning manufacturing were engaged in were altogether different from the conditions under which small farmers in Scotland engaged in their industry. In engineering and cotton-spinning there was, at any rate in most cases, a guarantee that their rent was not going to be increased in proportion to their energy; and if, peradventure, any one of them was in a position to have his rent increased, he did not lead that strenuous life which was necessary in order to contribute to holding his own in competition with other people. Neither would the farmer. There were two things involved in the argument of the Leader of the Opposition and of the hon. Member for North-West Lanark. First, that agriculture must be a diminishing industry in proportion to the industrial activity of the whole people. That was perfectly true among a wealthy people, because food was a relatively smaller proportion of their needs. Secondly, machinery had, to some extent, displaced people from agriculture as in other industries. But he would say that rural depopulation did not proceed from either of these two causes, but from the fact of the insecurity of the tillers of the soil, together with the absence of proper education, and co-operation. The right hon. and hon. Gentlemen seemed to have forgotten the importation of immense quantities of agricultural produce, mentioned that day. We imported something like £60,000,000 of value in the way of agricultural produce. Hon. Members above the gangway might say that the way to stop that was by imposing taxation on food stuffs. He and those who agreed with him believed in a better way, and that was to make our soil more productive, and, by sustaining a larger number of our own people on the land, to make a market for our own manufactures. He and his friends were going to support the Bill, because it was a step, however small, in that direction. They hoped the Bill would pass in the House this year, and he felt sure that the agricultural population of the country were in favour of it. Some of the small people who were working at present for wages, if the Bill passed, would be in a position to start on that lower rung of the ladder so often spoken of. There were a large number of people in Scotland with a little money who, could they but get a footing on that lower rung, would develop and increase the agricultural population of Scotland, and save us, he believed, from a great deal of that deterioration that was going on in our race, and ultimately do something to mitigate the terrible urban congestion. For these reasons he hoped the Bill would pass through this House and also the other House this session.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I am reluctant to interpose so early in the debate, and I do not desire to trespass longer than I can possibly help on the attention of the House. But I think that even the most devoted supporters on that side of the House of the new form of closure, if they have been present during the debate, must have been asking themselves some rather anxious questions as to the desirability of the procedure which the Government have adopted. This debate has lasted about three hours out of the four that we have at our disposal; and it must be manifest to the most casual listener that the time has been altogether too short for the full expression of the views of hon. Gentlemen in all quarters of the House. I am not going to suggest that His Majesty's Government took refuge in this remarkable procedure in order to save themselves from an unpleasant position. It is a remarkable fact that out of those who spoke this afternoon and who usually support the Government two hon. Members, both Scotsmen and Scottish Members, acquainted with Scottish needs and Scottish affairs, throughout the whole of their speeches condemned the Bill root and branch and gave very substantial reasons for doing so. I am sure that the Secretary for Scotland must regret that he had committed himself to the astounding statement that the opposition to the Bill is political and partisan, and proceeds from those who are opposed to the Government on general political grounds. The right hon. Gentleman has already heard two Members of his own Party criticise the Bill and oppose it; and he should know better than I do that in Scotland this last winter and before, there were many men who hold the same political views as he does and belong to his Party who have condemned this Bill, basing their condemnation of it on their acquaintance with agriculture in Scotland. Through the whole of the debate there has run a sense of unreality. It is not this Bill that is in hon. Gentlemen's minds. It is not the merits or demerits of this particular measure. It is quite another thing. We know that—we were not in doubt about it, we knew it definitely from the candid avowals of the Secretary for Scotland himself who told us that there was plenty of time for Amendments. And when some of my friends anxious to take part in the debate became a little impatient at the very large proportion of the limited time at our disposal taken by the right hon. Gentleman, he reminded them that they need not be impatient because there would be opportunity for them to express their views. What opportunity? Then the right hon. Gentleman in justification of that statement told us that although the Government are limiting discussion here, there is another House in which the Bill will be discussed. What an astounding second volume this is of the great work which was commenced in the autumn. We were told from platforms all over Scotland that this Bill was to be brought in line by line and word for word as it was before, sent up to the House of Lords, and if they did not pass it they must take the consequences. Now we are told by the only member of the Government who has spoken that it is to the House of Lords the Liberal Government looks for the full discussion and adoption of Amendments which this House is forbidden even to consider. I think nobody who has listened to the right hon. Gentleman's speech, nobody who has followed the strange history of this Bill, can doubt now that whatever confidence the Government might have in their Bill or some of their other proposals they have not got the same robust confidence in their policy with regard to the House of Lords which seemed to animate them in the earlier part of last autumn. The right hon. Gentleman gave a somewhat lengthy description of the Bill, and quoted some of the criticisms that have been addressed to it. But what struck many of us as being very remarkable was that he did not tell us what were the reasons that led the Government without inquiry or investigation to adopt this Bill as a remedy for the evils of which they complained. He told us in an earlier speech, and he referred briefly to it in this, that the object of the Government is to put an end to the depopulation of the rural districts. I do not know whether he has any real confidence in this Bill as a remedy for depopulation, but if he listened to the admirable speech made by the hon. Member for North Lanarkshire earlier in the afternoon he must have realised that figures which cannot be answered were produced by my hon. friend, and I do not think that anybody will be found in this House or outside of it who will contradict them. These figures prove that by small holdings you are not of necessity going to get rid of rural depopulation; they also show that where you have adopted the small holding system in some cases there is a decrease of the population. In the recess a comparison was made between Scotland and the rest of the country, and we had some wonderful figures produced by the Prime Minister in regard to Wales. Those figures have all collapsed. They were challenged; and by whom? The Secretary for Scotland tells us that the policy of the Government is opposed only by their political opponents. But was it a political opponent who exposed the travesty of the Prime Minister's figures, showing that they were erroneous and that not one of them could stand the smallest test? Was it a political opponent who showed that the analogy of Wales which the Government had put forward was one which could not be relied upon. No; that destruction of the Government's own figures came from one of their own supporters, and yet the Secretary for Scotland wishes us to believe that the opposition to this measure is purely political.

MR. SINCLAIR: When I made that statement everybody must know that I made it with some exceptions.

MR. WALTER LONG: The right hon. Gentleman says he made the statement with some exceptions, but let us see what this infers. There have been two Scottish members who are supporters of the Government who have led the debate this afternoon and some of their supporters in the other House spoke against it and an active part was taken by Lord Rosebery. But apart from that, if the criticism of the Secretary for Scotland means anything it means this, that our opposition is not based upon our honest opinion that the Bill is a bad Bill, and that it will prejudicially affect the agricultural industry in Scotland, but that it is because we are political opponents of the Government that we resist it.

MR. SINCLAIR: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to explain? I mean to say that the Party opposite have determined to oppose this Bill, and has therefore commanded the legions of its supporters to give them their assistance in opposing it.

MR. WALTER LONG: I confess I am a little puzzled to see what the interruption means, but I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that the statement which he has made now is not what he said when he was moving the Bill this afternoon, which was to the effect that the opposition to this Bill was a political opposition.

MR. SINCLAIR: Hear, hear!

MR. WALTER LONG: And that the opponents of the Bill were the partisans who belonged to this side of the House, the only limitation being that there were some exceptions. I maintain that the opposition to this Bill in Scotland has come from those, many of whom are supporters of the right hon. Gentleman, who are experienced in agriculture and whose knowledge of agriculture has compelled them to oppose the Bill irrespective of their own political views. I go further and I say that it is not the opposition to the Bill which is political and partisan, but it is the support of the Bill which comes from the political followers of the right hon. Gentleman that is so. The support of the Bill comes from hon. Gentlemen who believe that some great political advantage will be created by dealing in this way with the land question in Scotland. Take it from the right hon. Gentleman's own point of view. In order to get rid of depopulation in your rural districts you are prepared to tear up by the roots the whole agricultural system of Scotland. You are prepared to apply to the Lowlands of Scotland, principles which have hitherto been limited to a part of Scotland different in every respect from the Lowlands and from parts of Scotland in regard to which I do not think that even now you can produce evidence that this kind of legislation has been beneficial and successful. It may be that in certain cases you have secured the improvement of the condition of the crofter tenant; but where you change a system in that way you get rid of the landlord influence, the landlord power, and the landlord money, and where you put the whole responsibility and all the burden upon the tenant and do not make him the actual owner, you have no right to claim that you have any experience of the results until that system has been in vogue not for twenty years, but for a period more like half a century. We know very well that it is in the second generation that difficulties occur in regard to your fixity of tenure. At all events there will be no dispute about this, that whatever may be the condition of things in Scotland, the introduction of dual ownership of land in Ireland brought evils which made it compulsory upon all parties who were committed to it, to get rid of the system by buying out one of the parties to the contracts. Is there any reason to believe that what has been the experience of Ireland must not be the experience of other countries where similar principles are applied? You apply to Scotland, in order to get rid of this difficulty, a system which I believe, notwithstanding the views held by the Government, gives undoubtedly dual ownership, and, as my hon. friend the Member for Leith Burghs says, you have not the courage of your convictions. You do not go on to complete the fabric by giving freedom of sale. Therefore you have again a fixity of tenure, you have again a dual ownership which contains all the vices of the original land legislation for Ireland and none of its virtues. The right hon. Gentleman was indignant with one of my hon. friends for saying that he had condemned the landlords wholesale. It is perfectly true that the right hon. Gentleman said that there are some good landlords, and that he believed the majority of them are trying to do their duty, but he made the amazing statement that it was impossible for the ordinary landlord to appreciate the feelings or comprehend the needs of the tenant farmer or of the labouring man. If that is in the smallest degree true, is it not remarkable that the agriculture of Scotland and of Great Britain should be what we know it to be, the most developed and the very best form of agriculture that is to be found in any country in the world, and producing crops which will compare both as regards quality and quantity with those of any other country except one? And yet these results have been brought about by the wise and generous expenditure of money by the landlord on the development of his estate, and by the excellent way in which the farmers and labourers combine to add their share in the production. These results have followed under a system where the whole development rests upon the owner of the property, who is, according to the right hon. Gentleman, unable to appreciate the real needs of the tenants on his estate. I do not believe that there is any gathering of labourers or tenant farmers in England, Scotland or Wales, who would not say, if the question were put to them apart from politics, that there is not a shadow of foundation for that charge against the landlords. We were irresistibly reminded by the speech of the Secretary for Scotland to-day of the comment made by the Leader of the Opposition last year when he told us that this was a Government which legislated in compartments. Could anybody who wanted to attack the English Land Act of last session have done so more completely, more emphatically, or I might say with greater venom, than the right hon. Gentleman did in the course of his speech in defence of his own measure, which was an absolute condemnation of the Bill which he and his colleagues passed last session? He told us that everything that had been done in this country with regard to land was wrong, that the tenants could not protect themselves, that the labourers could not protect themselves, and that without a Land Court you could not expect justice or benefit to agriculture. But he went further and gave as his reason that he did not believe in the county council. Last year his colleagues said that if you are to develop small holdings you must trust the county councils which have local knowledge and local responsibility to aid you in the work. Now the right hon. Gentleman says: "Not at all, because in Scotland the county councils do not represent the locality." Then an hon. Gentleman behind him told the right hon. Gentleman that in some cases in consequence of the bad train service in Scotland, the poorer men could not get to the county council meetings. But it is not a question of the train service, but of the amount of time it takes to serve on the county councils which the poor man cannot afford to give. But what is the right hon. Gentleman's remedy? It is a novel remedy for Liberal administration. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that the county councils are not representative; and what are we to have under his scheme? We are to have more centralisation than ever before. He assured us, and I am confident that it will be so in his case, that the men who are appointed will not be appointed from any political motives and that he will see that the best men are secured. Whom will these men represent? Are they in any way representative of the people whose interests are confided to them? They are more officials centralised in a Government Department to do work which in England has to be done by those who are elected by the people. It is an extraordinary illustration of the difference in the legislative achievements of the Government. I can only say that during the whole of the debates on the English Land Bill there was nobody on this side of the House so powerful and so bitter in their condemnation of the proposals of the Government as the Members who spoke from the Ministerial side of the House this afternoon, and who usually support the right hon. Gentleman. I do not wish to discuss the merits or rather the demerits of the Bill. We are charged with opposing it on purely political grounds. I do not know on what grounds others may be opposing it, but so far as I am concerned I oppose it because I believe it deals in the very worst way possible with agriculture either in Scotland or in England. The

Bill does give fixity of tenure and does create dual ownership, and the right hon. Gentleman proposes under it also to separate the Scottish business of the Board of Agriculture from the English and to give Scotland a separate Department. He quoted some words of mine on a former occasion, but I think he ought to have quoted the words I used on the main proposition. The right hon. Gentleman forgot to tell the House that I did not go to Scotland as Minister for Agriculture once, but five times, and upon the last two occasions the suggestion for a separate Board of Agriculture had dwindled to a suggestion that there should be one or two officials in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman's contention with regard to the Contagious Disease Act falls entirely to the ground. He says these Acts are administered by Statute and the Minister could not alter them. That is true, but the Minister can repeal them if necessary. But it is not the question of the administration of these Acts alone. What happened the other day when questions were asked in this House as to the serious outbreak of cattle disease in Scotland? That was not dealt with by a separate answer. All Members of the House were deeply interested in that serious question, and there was a Minister in this House who could answer for it, and there was the knowledge that the orders of that Minister would be carried out. If the alteration proposed by the right hon. Gentleman is carried out that could no longer be the case, because it is obvious that when you set up a separate Department with a separate head for Scotland, and a case of this kind occurs, Members of this House will not only have to address themselves to the President of the Board of Agriculture but also to the Scottish section, and it will be necessary to see that the orders sent out by the two Departments are the same. This is one of the most serious questions that could be met with, because one of our great sources of wealth is our flocks and herds, and anybody who remembers the ravages made in our flocks and herds thirty or forty years ago must see how very serious it is. The anxiety in all quarters of the House upon this question is manifest; and I say that if this change is made the administration must be weakened and cease to be as perfect as we desire it to be. This change is to be made in Scotland to stop rural depopulation. To stop rural depopulation you are going to treat the lowlands of Scotland in a totally different manner from that in which you treat the north of England. My hon. friend the Member for South-East Durham in my opinion made a perfect case against this Bill. For my part I am thankful that you are not going to apply this system to England. On our side of the border we do not want Land Courts. I believe our farmers do not want continuity of tenure and that they are satisfied with the present laws. And I very much doubt whether in Scotland there is the strength of feeling on this subject to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. Why have the Government gone through the farce of giving three days to this Bill? As it is quite certain that the Government intend this Bill to be amended in the House of Lords, let it go straight to the House of Lords and come back to us with the Amendments which we are not allowed to make. Then there will be three or four days in which to deal with it in its amended form instead of debating it as we now are in its incomplete state. The defence of the Bill is not very whole-hearted, because one of the supporters of the Government has told the House that he only supports it as a small instalment of a great reform. I believe his remark is more true than that of the Secretary for Scotland. I believe this Bill is more likely to injure agriculture and the labourer on the land than anything else that could be done. I believe that if this Bill passes into law you will have to carry fresh legislation to abolish the landlord altogether and get rid of dual ownership or you will have, by other legislation, to amend the law in a different way. Convinced as we all are that this will injure agriculture and not assist it we oppose the Bill not as political partisans but as citizens of this country who wish to prevent injury being done to our greatest industry.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): In the discussions upon this question during the last two years, Scotland at all events, may be said to have derived one advantage in so far that we have been successful in ingathering to our Scottish discussions the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin. It is a pleasure to listen to him in these debates. I may have to differ from him on a few points, but we all recognise the great interest which he takes in these matters, and his honesty of purpose in discussing them. The right hon. Gentleman very naturally founded on the fact that two speeches have been made by Liberal Members against the Bill, and he says, "Look at that. Is not that a startling thing in a short debate?" Well, it is better to look at how the figures actually stand. Scotland at this moment is represented by seventy-two Members. Sixty of these are Liberals. Of these sixty, three disapprove of the Bill, and of these three two have spoken to-day. So that the situation even now with regard to the opinion of Scotland is as strong as this—that fifty-seven Scottish Members are enthusiastically for it, and fifteen Scottish Members are against it. Of course it is very difficult for English Members, and several of them have taken part in this debate, to realise the strength of feeling in regard to this measure. My right hon. friend who has just spoken has adopted exactly the attitude adopted by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords. On the visit he paid to Scotland, Lord Lansdowne laid down two propositions which have been reiterated in this House this afternoon. In a short word—he said this Bill was Irish, and it should be English. To that our answer is that this Bill is Scotch and should be Scottish. I thought we could not improve upon or vary those propositions until I heard the hon. Member for Leith Burghs, whose views appeared to be that the Bill should be neither Irish nor Scottish, but that on the whole it should incline to a Welsh solution. I wish to say one word in the limited time at my disposal upon the proposition that the Bill is Irish ere I take up the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman who says that it contains none of the virtues of the Irish system and all its vices. Roughly speaking, the Irish system is a system of three F's.—fixity of tenure, fair rent, and free sale. In the crofting counties in Scotland we have for twenty-two years adopted and in this Bill we adopt a system of two F's. We have no free sale; and the advantage of having no free sale is that the Gombeen man has never been able to penetrate into the Highlands of Scotland. A negotiable asset has never been created for the tenant under which the merchant and the money-lender could come around and persuade him to part with his property. The system that we have is the two F's. What is the attitude of the Unionist Party with regard to the two F's? Authoritatively they have declared that these are vices. It is a vice to have a fair rent impartially fixed. Could ever landlordism declare itself more absolutely? It is a vice to have fixity of tenure. The very secret of the independent holding of land is fixity and permanence of tenure. Rather than have that, say the Unionist Party, let the landlords be expropriated altogether. There is the whole diameter of the opposition between the two Parties in the State on this Bill. I wish to make now one other remark as to a good many of the figures which were given by the Member for Lanarkshire. I will take one broader figure. I agree with him very largely in the view that he took with reference to percentages and population in various areas. I agree that it is very difficult to make any induction which will lead you to an absolutely irrefutable conclusion. We have over and over again heard Irish members declaiming on the subject of emigration, and saying that the lifeblood of Ireland was being drawn away across the Atlantic. In Scotland in the last recorded year, 1906, we were able to make a contrast on the subject of emigration in Ireland. In Ireland there were 51,200 souls who left and went abroad, and the net figure of actual emigration was 31,000. In the same year 53,100 men, women and children left Scotland, and the net figure was 34,000. For the first time in our history the tide of emigration has been greater from Scottish shores than from Irish shores. Apart from percentages I trust that the House will agree that that is a fair and broad view to take as to the necessity for some measure which will undo this, which will revoke this tendency to leave our native shores. And when I say that in Scotland the amount of land available stands in this position, that there are nearly three millions of acres dedicated to sport, and that for every man, woman and child in Scotland there are 4½ acres of ground, I submit to the House that we have made out a case for saying that these great spaces, North, South, East and West, in our native land should be made more a refuge for the population than for the deer. It is said: "Why not give this duty to the county councils?" We have had some experience of county councils in regard to this matter. In the first place, I have not observed during these two years of discussion that any county council in Scotland has asked Parliament to entrust this duty to it, and not to a central body. But, in the second place, we have had sixteen years experience of county council action—or inaction, which is it? The county of Inverness is not without knowledge on the subject. Somewhere about 1,200 applications were made in that county. The county council appointed a committee; that committee appointed a local visiting subcommittee; that spent nine days in the affected districts, and that subcommittee reported strongly to its committee, which in turn reported to the county council of Inverness, that the demand for land was clamant and there was abundance of land to satisfy the demand. That happened nine years ago. And the county council has never disposed of the applications yet! It knew that it could either grant the request or refuse it and that an appeal could be made to the Local Government Board of Scotland; but it neither granted nor refused the request and so appeal has been impossible, and the thing is suspended till this moment. What we say as a Government is that, with experience such as that, we wish to entrust the management of this Statute to those who are in whole-hearted sympathy with it. Unless you have whole-hearted sympathy with a measure you can never get it well administered. I had little experience with the county of Lanark. It is the most populous of our counties,—even apart from its urban population, what remains is still the most populous. A factor wrote to me asking me not to say anything against the county council because, he said, since the Allotments and Small Holdings Act of 1892 they have not, although they have advertised in a dozen newspapers, been able to get any application until March, 1907. I wrote back to get hold of the advertisement and found that it contained an announcement that the council was desirous "of ascertaining whether there was a demand for small holdings" under the Act of 1892. When was that advertisement made? Will the House believe it; it was only made in March, 1907. Is not the like of that a conclusive example of the need for seeing that the administration of the Act is placed in the hands of those who will have an insight into the situation and whole-hearted sympathy with its administration? I know perfectly well that two counties have taken this matter up. The county of Caithness took it up because the county council passed a resolution against the Bill. An election came on; and out of twelve vacancies ten of the old councillors were turned out and ten approvers of the Bill were put in. In Sutherland several men who contested seats were turned out if against the Bill and replaced by those in its favour. These are instances of what we say—that not only by the inaction of the county councils, but by their positive actions and declarations of policy, we are justified in adhering to the precedent of the Crofters Act and administering not through county councils but through a central body. I will only say with reference to observations that have been made as to the provisions of the Bill, that it is out of the question now to suggest as Lord Rosebery once did, that in some reckless and ruinous fashion farms are going to be cut up. Section 7 preserves the right of every tenant during the entire currency of his lease, and compensation on the full scale is granted, not only to the tenant, but to the landlord, and to the landlord in respect not only of the holding, but of its effect upon the estate generally. Accordingly, I think we have no attack made upon the shape and frame of the Bill. It is only said: "Why is it not English?" I will put this to my hon. friends on the other side. Assuming you had a line drawn from Chester to

Bournemouth, and on one side of that line you had a most excellent system on which improvement had followed, and in many cases the very face of the country had been transformed—better drainage, better fencing and better housing for man and beast—and assume that a Bill was brought in to extend that system to the rest of England. But the House of Lords says: "Oh, no. Do not make the rest of England like the part that has gone on so well. Make it like Scotland." How would Englishmen like that? Suppose they were threatened by the Lords that they must become Scottish in dress? Or that in religion they must as in Scotland treat every Episcopalian as a Dissenter? The fact is, this argument cannot apply in the case of a self-governed country like Scotland which is so fully alive to its own interests. I never yet heard it suggested that Scotland did not know the right side of a shilling. Upon this simple ground that the shrewdest of nations is absolutely resolved upon this Bill, I ask all Members of the House—Englishmen who appreciate the illustration given, Irishmen who know the value of self-government, and Scotsmen who know exactly the outs and ins, the *pros* and *cons* of this measure—to adhere to the policy of last session. As to the shortness of our debate, it is well to be short, although the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has given us a hint which may fructify in time to come as to a shorter method still of disposing of our business when another House is recalcitrant. We shall not forget that. A word in conclusion as to the interesting speech of the hon. Member for Berwickshire. He is all in favour of education and co-operation among these small holders. So am I. I find nothing in the Bill to derogate from these great functions, but I find much in it that is to their advantage. Education, co-operation, and all those things which are so important in a country which at this moment is importing from foreign shores not less than £70,000,000 worth of perishable farm produce, are, in our view, best built upon a situation in which the tenant shall be secure in his holding, shall have independence in his life and career, and shall face all the problems not only of his individual and family effort, but of co-operation with others on the footing that he cannot be dispossessed or penalised in consequence of good agriculture.

*Mr. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said that perhaps the best argument that had been brought forward in favour of the Bill was that the crofters had spent £150,000 of their own money on the crofts. But he asked the House to remember that there were 28,000 crofters, and that the Crofters Acts had been in operation for twenty-two years, so that the expenditure of the crofters on their crofts amounted to 5s. 6d. per croft per annum.

And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, Mr. Speaker proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of the 13th February.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 353; Noes, 106. (Division List No. 12.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt. Hn. Sir J. T. (Ches.)

Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody

Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col.Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson,John (Gateshead)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras,E.
Leese,Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert

Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Markham,Arthur Basil
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal (TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor,James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk,Eye)
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinburgh,Central
Price,Robert John (Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford,E.
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)

Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mptn
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southamp'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, Rt Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarthn
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach, H. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc
Chance, Frederick William
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clark, George Smith (Belfast, N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coats, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim,
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marques of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. H. Lt-Col. A. R
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurran
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Whitbread, Howard
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes.—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 247†; Noes, 103. (Division List No. 13.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt. Hn. Sir J. T. (Ches.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir W. J. (S. Pancras, W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan. J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davis, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, Geroge
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John

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† See correction in second entry following Division List.

M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Kllop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholson, Charles N (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford, E.
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Reddy, M
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendaall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson, Sir G Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F, E, Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austen (East Toxteth)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Ward, W Dudley (Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarthn
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh., N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES

Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A (Worc.
Clark, George Smith (Belfast, N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birminghm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalmenny, Lord
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fletcher, J. S.
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford

Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement(Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway,Rt. Hon.Sir JohnH.
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt.Hon.Col.W
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King,Sir HenrySeymour(Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood,Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Muntz, Sir Philip A.
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John FrederickPeel
Roberts,S.(Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sheffield,SirBerkeleyGeorge D.
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry(Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant,Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker,Col.W.H.(Lancashire)
Ward, Col. C. E. (Kent,Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A Stanley(York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Bill read a second time, and committed, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February, to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL DIVISION (NUMBERS INCORRECTLY REPORTED).

Mr. Joseph Pease and Viscount Valentia, the Tellers in the Aye Division Lobby, in the Division this day on the Question, "That the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill be now read a second time," came to the Table and stated that they had erroneously reported the number of the Ayes as 247 instead of 347, which was the proper number.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER directed the Clerk to correct the number in the Journal accordingly; Ayes, 347; Noes, 103.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

DUNDALK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL (BY ORDER).

Read a second time, and committed.

LOCAL TAXATION.

*Mr. HEDGES (Kent, Tonbridge) said that the Motion which stood on the Paper in his name in regard to local taxation was one which he thought the House would agree with him was very opportune, coming as it did before the Budget was introduced, and demanding a reform which was very desirable. It was—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Local Taxation and the relations between Local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between Local and Imperial obligations."

He hoped that the opinions which might be expressed in the discussion that evening would have some weight in the decision which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might arrive at a later stage of the session. He was rather confirmed in that expectation by the fact that a few days ago the right hon. Gentleman, in replying to a question, said that

> "The relationship between local and Imperial finance was receiving the attention of His Majesty's Government."

It would be within the memory of the House that the final Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into this question was presented in 1901, but nothing much was done until last year, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer made an excellent start by clearing the decks for action. Under these circumstances, he thought he was in some sense preaching to the converted. In the speech which the hon. Gentleman made on that occasion, referring to the stopping of ear-marking of certain taxes for local purposes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "The object is first of all to get rid of an enormous, most unsightly, and inconvenient complication in our national accounts; second, to set free the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to a large area of taxation; and thirdly, to clear the ground—for this is only a provisional arrangement—for a future re-settlement, I hope on equitable terms, of the whole relations between the central authority and the local authorities."

Perhaps this Motion might be looked upon as a reminder to the right hon. Gentleman who, he hoped, would be able to say that having put his hand to the plough he would not look back. After this, he was sure that no expression of his in regard to the existing state of affairs could be considered an exaggeration. It was piecemeal, haphazard, unbusiness-like, and involved; that description was a re-echo of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman last year. The method of allocation seemed to him to be very like legislation by reference, but somewhat worse. This was what was said in the Report of the Commission in regard to the apportionment of the proceeds of whiskey money between county boroughs and counties—

> "The Commissioners determined that an equitable adjustment between each county and the county boroughs deemed to be therein situate would be effected by giving to such several authorities in each year the annual amount received prior to the passing of the Local Government Act out of the grants discontinued after the passing of that Act together with the amount payable under the above mentioned Section 26 of the Act, and dividing the remainder in proportion to the rateable values of the county and boroughs."

He ventured to suggest to the House that such a sentence as that was worthy to be compared with the most involved ruminations of a philosopher, but few had any idea of what it meant. We suffered, he knew, in this country from the disadvantages just as we enjoyed the advantages of being citizens of an old country with old traditions, and he suggested that the time had now arrived, and was more than fully ripe, when the whole question should be gone into of the relationship between local and imperial burdens, so that these might be put on an equitable basis. What were the complaints? Undoubtedly they were very constant, and perhaps they heard more frequently of them in the localities interested in the matter. But he was sure that hardly a post arrived at head-quarters which did not bring some inquiry or complaint from local authorities in regard to the position in which they stood on this important matter. Roughly, the complaints of local authorities ranged themselves under four heads. In the first place, ratepayers had to meet the cost of national services which ought to be borne by the tax-payer, who had the broader shoulders. In other words, there should be a more clearly marked distinction between the payment for onerous services and the payment for services which were beneficial. Secondly, there was a lack of variety arising from the fact that rates were confined to the occupiers of rateable property. Thirdly, there was a wide disparity between different areas, though adjacent, and fulfilling the same conditions; and fourthly, the cause of complaint was one very frequently expressed, and found its chief exponents in the agricultural districts—he meant the incidence of rates upon the agricultural part of our population; the urban ratepayers in their turn complaining that by reason of the relief given to agriculture by the Agricultural Rates Act their burdens were by so much increased. In other words, the urban ratepayers paid for agriculturists, who even now said they bore more than their fair share of the burden. He thought that under a wise and properly adjusted scheme both these complaints would disappear. It was not fair to either the agricultural or the urban ratepayers that either of them should have just cause to say that one or the other was treated with favouritism. In fact the very existence of this mutual suspicion and mistrust shewed that the method of rating was not fair to all those involved. Lastly, it was essentially the poor districts of low total rateable value which particularly suffered. He thought to even the wayfaring man—the man who ran could read—that those things were fairly self-evident. Perhaps the most important of them came under the head first mentioned, that was to say that rate-payers as such were bearing large burdens for national charges. Generally, it might be said that we suffered from another peculiarity in regard to our position in local finance, viz., the multiplication of spending authorities. There were the county council, the district council, the town council, the parish council, and the boards of guardians, all spending money. Another peculiar feature was that although half the total rates were called poor-rates, only a half of these was used in any sense for the relief of the poor. That might not be a very important matter, for it would not affect the amount of the cheque which would have to be drawn; but it was rather an archaic and anomalous thing that we should call by the name of poor-rate, something which had nothing to do with the relief of the poor. It was a matter of congratulation that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had practically stopped the system of assigned revenues. It was with the greatest possible pleasure that they heard in the last Budget speech that that absurd method—by which certain revenues, which were assigned to local authorities, was going to be stopped, and the right hon. Gentleman gave them all the more hope that he had taken this matter in hand in a business-like fashion and really intended to place the whole scheme on a business-like foundation. Periodical grants-in-aid on no fixed principle whatever were a hand to mouth expedient, with the necessary equivalent grants to parts of the United Kingdom not affected by legislation which might entail expenditure; they were not defended, but as a temporary palliative pending permanent adjustment. The more the whole position was considered as to the relationship on which local and national finance stood, the more he thought the balance of criminality lay here: that there was a want of system and of any fixed principle. It might be forgotten, but the original intention was undoubtedly expressed in the earlier Acts regulating the imposition of rates, that it was axiomatic that rates and taxes should be levied according to capacity to pay; and there was no doubt that the rates themselves were originally intended as a local income-tax, and that the rent was only a rough and ready method of calculation. The income-tax as now levied followed the eternal principle of justice, that taxation should be levied according to the capacity to pay, but in the rates this principle was ignored to a large extent. The rates were fixed on the basis of the rent of a man's house but in these days of commerce and trade that was a very poor index of a man's capacity to pay. They had heard a good deal in the course of the discussion of this question about taxing certain things, such as land, houses and so forth, but they did not tax these any more than they taxed coffee, or sugar; but they taxed the people who paid. He hoped he might be pardoned for making such a simple statement, but nevertheless it was necessary to bear it in mind and to understand that it was the people who paid and not the places they occupied. The incidence might be difficult to trace, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech last year evidently did not dismiss the idea of exacting a contribution from personalty. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "As regards the death duties, with the revision of those duties in 1894 by Sir William Harcourt even the semblance of a special contribution from personalty to local taxation disappeared; and the Agricultural Rates Act and various other Acts which have since been passed have rendered the system even more intolerable than it was before."

The regretful tone of that phrase "Even the semblance of a special contribution from personalty to local taxation disappeared," seemed to indicate that there was some lingering hope in the Chancellor's mind that there was some spot at which personalty might be hit. As he had said, the incidence might be difficult to trace, but he thought that taxation, even local, should fall on the lines which he had indicated and should have regard to the capacity of the person rated to pay. The position seemed to him to be brought down to these lines. There were certain charges which were collected locally and administered locally, but which were undoubtedly onerous and national. No one in his senses would pretend or even suggest that the collection of dust from outside a man's own house should be borne by the National Exchequer. That was an ordinary expenditure which undoubtedly should be borne by himself without reference to any larger issue. But when they came to some of the other expenditure which was collected and administered by local authorities it could not be denied that it was national in its character and national in its results. He had only to mention the item of expenditure for education to show that it was now more than ever a matter of national concern and a matter which brought national benefit, especially in these days when migration was becoming almost the order of the day. A very large number of our lads and maidens were educated in our village schools; then they went away, to his mind, unfortunately, into the large centres of population, and there used the education which the rural ratepayers had paid for, for the benefit not only of the towns in their ordinary commercial capacity, but, as he was glad to know, also for the benefit of the physique of the people of those metropolitan communities. That could hardly be called a local responsibility, when so many of our young healthy lives were poured into the large cities after having been educated at the expense of the rural ratepayers. Then again there was the question of emigration, and there they came against not only a national question, but one which affected the whole of the Empire. If a locality was famed for education, he thought the least they could ask the English House of Commons was for some assistance with regard to the expenditure. Then another point which had been a matter of very serious complaint, was the money which had to be spent by local authorities upon main roads. He knew, and those who were the happy or unhappy possessors of motor cars, were equally well aware, that they did not confine their use of them to the parish in which they were rated, but that in the course of their peregrinations they covered the roads of perhaps 100 or 200 authorities, who had to maintain them at great cost, at the expense of the ratepayers in their respective areas. Regard should also be had to the fact that this new method of traction was not only used for motor cars and pleasure vehicles, but was applied to those tremendous engines which went about country roads drawing forty or fifty tons behind them, and doing damage. They did not belong to any particular area, but seemed to come more within the class of railway transit than anything else. He thought the time had arrived when the local authorities should be relieved of a large portion of the expenditure on what were called main roads, and at least half of these heavy payments should be met by payments other than rates. There ought also to be main national roads. He believed that this evil was likely to grow to a very large extent, and if we got the local authorities to look after the administration of these affairs, the least we could do as a central authority was to see that they were not out of pocket by the process. Several methods had been suggested from time to time with regard to the raising of the money which might be devoted to helping local authorities, and relieving the burden under which they were undoubtedly labouring, and with the permission of the House, he would like just in passing to deal with some of those which had been suggested, and had more or less reason behind them. First he would say that no inconsiderable portion of those who had thought upon the subject, had a leaning towards the imposition of a local income-tax. He was bound to say that at first sight the local income-tax was very attractive and had much to commend it. It fulfilled the admitted conditions as to taxable capacity, and he did not think it should be altogether dismissed from the minds of those who had the management of these affairs, without further consideration. He was quite aware that the difficulties in the way were not inconsiderable. It would act undoubtedly perhaps in exaggeration of the difficulty he had mentioned of the disparity between the burdens in different areas. That was to say that in rich residential centres money would be raised when it was not particularly wanted; but in poor and thickly populated areas they could not raise the money required for the purposes to which local taxation was devoted. But might he suggest that one difficulty could be overcome, and he believed it was overcome in some of the Continental countries where a local income-tax was in operation? The difficulty which at first sight seemed almost insurmountable was the case of a man who had two or three residences, or had a residence in addition to that of his business premises. It would be manifestly unfair that he should be taxed or rated upon his whole income in every locality in which he resided. But a very easy system might be devised to overcome the difficulty; for might it not be possible to bring into account the various rents which he paid in order to adjust the amounts payable in the different areas. He only mentioned these as methods which had been suggested for raising money for local purposes, and there was one which had been brought forward and had been mentioned by the Commissioners in their Report of 1901. It was to localise Schedule A of the income-tax. He did not think there were so many objections to that, but still there were manifest objections to it. He only suggested it, and if the Chancellor of the Exchequer pulverised it with a sentence he would have nothing to say. What it meant was to transfer from the book of the tax collector to the book of the rate collector the amount payable under Schedule A. It could not be denied that the value attaching to property under Schedule A was a local value, that was to say it had obtained its present position of value by work done on the spot and was local in its circumstances. Then, of course, it had this extra advantage which his hon. friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme would appreciate, that it would fall on the owner and would therefore, according to his view, be more equitable. Then there was another suggestion made with regard to the transfer of the inhabited house duty, but there were very much the same objection to that as to the localisation of the income-tax under Schedule A, to which he had already referred. There remained, of course, the plan which had been in existence for some little time, that of making direct grants from the Exchequer to local authorities in order to relieve them from these onerous burdens which they had to bear, and when one had eliminated these different expedients, with their various advantages and difficulties, they came back at last to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and asked him to see that the payments made from the central authority were more in accord with the services rendered by the local authority on national lines. It had this advantage. It was simple and clear, and it involved no muddle for the accountants. There were objections raised by purists in economy and finance with regard to payments from the central authority, which though trite were none the less unreal. The objection to the extension of Parliamentary aid to local authorities was one based on economy. It implied that the money would be wasted. To this he thought the all-sufficient answer was that it depended upon the efficiency of the central control. The burden of the income-tax was just as much felt as the burden of the rates. The burden of the rates could only be lightened by an increase in the taxes, and the man who paid both was no better off. As a payer of taxes he was interested in national economy, and as a payer of rates in local economy; was it not absurd to say that the same person considered as a ratepayer was a miser, and considered as a taxpayer was a spendthrift. In this matter he had endeavoured to steer clear of figures, and all those matters which were difficult to follow, and which were, perhaps, neither interesting nor intelligible; but he thought he had said sufficient to show that the inequality had been recognised, the anomaly admitted. Local public life during the past twenty-five years had been growing in importance, and was, in his opinion, destined to become of much greater importance in years to come, when this House devolved further duties and responsibilities upon it. Local authorities and those who took part in local government were much grieved at the delay that had taken place in the settlement of this long unsettled question. This House had ever and again placed new obligations upon those who heroically and without any idea of reward carried on the drudgery of local government. New obligations and fresh responsibilities were placed upon them, and the reward in most cases was abuse from the ratepayers because the rates had gone up. He thought the time had arrived when they could with confidence look to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to do something which would relieve this intolerable strain; which would give greater freedom of action to those who had undertaken with no selfish interest the management of our local affairs, men who were public spirited in the highest sense. Now was the opportunity for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give some word of encouragement and some word of hope, which would send these men on their course of public service with greater confidence, and a great desire to use all those advantages which their position gave to fulfil the responsibilities this House placed upon them. He begged to move.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes) said that after the exhaustive speech of his hon. friend he desired only to place one particular aspect of this question before the House. He approached this question as one who had devoted some time to local government; who had been a member of every board in his district, and who was now vice-chairman of the county council. The present size of the local burden had produced a condition of things which had caused those responsible a considerable amount of anxiety. The voice of the ratepayer was always heard and always would be, but never had there been a time when his voice was heard so clearly and so persistently as at the present. It had become impossible to raise the standard of local government, and it was very difficult even to maintain the standard of efficiency which now existed. That the grievance of the ratepayers was to some extent justified there could be no doubt. A great number of things upon which the rates were spent to-day were strictly national, and a case certainly existed for the transference of some of those burdens to the Exchequer. There was education. He held, and held very strongly, that because a child was born in an out-of-the-way rural district that was no reason why that child was not to have every opportunity that was given to the child born in a progressive urban district. But no money was more difficult to raise than the education rate, or money that was to be spent generally on education. That was the direct result of localising it to a great extent. Then let him take the Poor Law. That was almost entirely a local burden. Very little contribution was made to Poor Law expenditure, and the whole burden fell upon the locality. It might have been all right years ago when population was differently distributed, but at the present time there existed very rich districts with a high rateable value and a small poor population, and consequently a very small poor rate, and on the other hand poor districts with a large poor population and an exceedingly high poor rate. That again was the direct effect of localisation instead of nationalisation. He supported very heartily the statement of his hon. friend that the ratepayer had great ground for complaint. He knew how impossible it was to persuade the occupier of the land that his rates were really a part of his rent, and how impossible it was to get the occupier to throw his weight and influence into the scale in favour of efficient administration when he knew it meant more expense. It was no good to discuss with these men the merits of a particular reform, the advantages of education, of public health, or of sanitation. One always came back to the fact that they were not willing to accept a higher standard if it meant an addition to what they had to pay. That might be a narrow view to take, but when the fact that an occupying farmer whose farm was rated at £100 paid just as much rates as the man who lived in a house rated at £100, was taken into consideration, and when regard was also had to the fact that the rates bore no relation to the profits he made, it was not surprising that such a view should be taken. Although it might be contended that in the long run the rates were paid by the landlord, it was only in the long run. It was actually the tenant of the farm who paid, and until there was some revision in land tenure the burden would remain on his shoulders. Another complaint he desired to make from the point of view of those engaged in local government was of the extraordinary complexity of the system of accounts. The finance system of a council was the most impossible thing that an ordinary person could set himself to unravel. It was not natural, but the result of historical accident; of grants-in-aid given from time to time, which had the effect of complicating in a most marvellous manner the accounts with which they had to deal. The most weighty charge which local authorities had against Parliament was that hardly a session passed without measures of social reform being passed and handed over to the local authorities to administer without any assistance being given to the local authorities for that purpose. For the past twenty years hardly a session had passed without Parliament adding further responsibilities to those already borne by the local authorities. In this connection he might mention several Education Acts, in reference to the last of which he ventured to urge on the Government the importance, and in fact the necessity for finding some money for its administration. Unless something was done in this direction he was certain that the administration of that Act would be ineffective. In many districts as little as possible would be done as was compatible with the control of the central Government. The general proposals he would venture to lay down which seemed to be important were first as to the way in which relief was given now, and the way in which it should be given. He did not agree with those who desired to place national services, on the ground that they were national services, on the Exchequer. He believed that such a thing would destroy all control by the local authority. If education were transferred to the central Government it would be necessary to have central administration, which would go a long way to destroy that local control which was one of the most creditable features of our public life. The present system of grants should be thoroughly overhauled, and grants made, distinctions being drawn between the national and local services which local authorities performed. National services should be assisted by grants and local services performed by the local authorities for their own benefit left to the charge of the local authorities. Any money that was given to local authorities should be given for a definite purpose, and should not be a mere dole; not a mere subsidy or a grant-in-aid, but given for a definite purpose like the education grant at the present time. The advantage was that they retained in the hands of Parliament the control which always ought to accompany the spending of money and enabled Parliament to exact a sufficiently high and uniform standard of administration in all the localities, and by this means they could also obtain a greater equality of burden between one district and another. In the Education Act of 1902, he held that some grants were given on the principle of the relation which the rateable value of the district bore to the child population, and by that means they got some relation between the wealth or poverty of a district and the amount of the burden which the district had to undertake. Again the grants made under the Poor Law for medical officers of health and Poor Law officers had proved on several occasions a very useful weapon in exacting a proper standard of administration for the various Poor Law boards, and had prevented them from making the far too common mistake of expecting to get good service from officers whom they did not pay an adequate salary. He earnestly hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would avoid the model of the Agricultural Rates Act under which the greatest amount was given where it was least needed, and the least where it was most needed. It was a grant simply in aid of expenditure and was not given for any definite and specific purpose. It also created the widest disparity of rates as between one district and another. The Act did nothing to level up the conditions between poor and rich districts, and the relief was given just as much for the maintenance of the district rate as it was for the repair of main roads, the expenses of the Poor Law, or education, which might fairly be described as national objects. It was only for national objects that he suggested more money was required, but it should be given on certain definite principles and always be subject to central control, and when local authorities were entrusted with the carrying out of certain work they should endeavour to obtain a high standard of efficiency in it. He earnestly asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether this matter could not be dealt with during the present Parliament. Unless something was done he felt certain that local government would not progress. It was difficult enough now to keep the work going and to get a sufficiently high standard of administration. Unless some more money was found for these national services which Parliament handed over to local authorities he was afraid the standard of all local government would go back, and it would be found more and more difficult to get men to serve upon these bodies unless they went there merely to save the rates, and the programme which the Government had set before itself to carry out would fail in many of its most important features.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Local Taxation and the relations between Local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between Local and Imperial obligations."—(*Mr. Hedges.*)

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I have listened, as I am sure every Member present has listened, with the greatest interest to the two able and lucid speeches from my hon. friends. I do not think the case, strong in many of its features as it undoubtedly is, could have been presented in a more persuasive way than it has been put before us by them. I will at once frankly state, on behalf of the Government, that I do not intend to offer any opposition to the Motion that has been put on the Paper by my hon. friend. I may perhaps make some reservation in my own mind, and I may as well make it also public, to the introduction of the word "immediate." In every political vocabulary that word is subject to a very wide construction. The hon. Member must be content with the assurance that I will give it as strict a construction as the exigencies of public life allow. Subject to that qualification, I see no objection to the Resolution, nor have I much ground of quarrel with the proposed Amendments or additions to it which are on the paper in the names of hon. Gentlemen opposite. One hon. Gentleman wishes to have "a more reasonable apportionment of the incidence of local burdens." I quite agree. A noble Lord wishes a more equitable adjustment "as between agriculture and other industries and sources of wealth." Taking these words in a discriminative sense, I quite agree that agricultural and other industries and all other sources of wealth ought to have their burdens equitably and fairly adjusted between them in regard to their ability to bear them and to their special circumstances. But, although I am not going to address the House, and certainly not my hon. friend, in a controversial spirit, there are one or two observations which I think I am bound to make and for which I would ask the indulgent attention of the House. Like almost every proposition that is discussed here on a private Member's night, this is a demand for a further and a very large sum from the Imperial Exchequer. Our professions of economy and our practice of economy, as we all find in our actual experience of political life, are limited to subjects on which expenditure can safely be restricted, while every one has one or more subjects of his own on which he thinks that public expenditure may be largely and legitimately increased. There is no demand received with more general favour than a demand for a contribution in aid of local rates. The solution of this problem, as my hon. friend has said, has been long delayed. That is no fault of mine. We have had no opportunity for a long time of dealing with the subject. The report of the Commission which dealt with it was presented to Parliament as far back as 1901, and until I last year undertook what I believe to have been the absolutely indispensable preliminary step towards simplifying national and local accounts, I am not aware that anything had been done to grapple with the question. That does not absolve us from the duty of facing it now. Let me point out one or two facts which perhaps are not sufficiently borne in mind in most of the controversies which take place on this subject. An enormous amount has been done in the last sixty years in the way of contributions from the Exchequer in aid of local taxation. Seventy years ago the Exchequer contributed not one halfpenny to local expenditure. The amount contributed last year, omitting the most important item of all—namely, the amount expended on primary education in the shape of the Parliamentary grant—was no less than £8,600,000 for England and Wales. And that does not take into account the fact that in the meantime the State has resumed the complete control and the entire expense of some costly services which formerly were locally administered. If we take the case of agriculture, while I do not deny that agriculture has still a grievance in the matter, the facts are very remarkable. The amount of public rates of all kinds levied in the rural parishes of England and Wales in the last year for which information is complete—namely, 1904–5—was £8,600,000, exactly the amount of the imperial subvention for local purposes, which I have already mentioned. Of that sum levied by local rates, £7,900,000 takes the form of poor rate, £630,000 separate rate for special expenses in rural districts, and £70,000 for rates under lighting and watching. To show that agriculture has not been entirely left out in the cold, let me point out that as regards poor rate, under the Agricultural Rates Act, one-half of the rate, as it stood at the time of the passing of that Act, is now contributed by the Imperial Exchequer, and the agricultural occupier pays only the balance. I quite agree that since that Act was passed the burden of local rates in the agricultural districts has increased substantially, largely owing to the increase of the local cost of education. But the fact remains that, as regards the poor rate the agricultural ratepayer is in an exceptionally favourable position. Then, as regards the rate for special expenses, he is rated only on one-quarter his annual valuation; and as regards the lighting and watching rate only on one-third. Notwithstanding that recognition by Parliament of the heavy pecuniary local burdens of the ratepayers, I agree that there are districts in which the rates still press very heavily on agriculture. In my opinion, and the opinion of my colleagues, it is a condition precedent to making any progress in this matter that we should have a proper system of valuation. There is no use going on doling out money here and there so long as our valuation, both as between different interests and still more as between different areas in different parts of the country, is conducted, not on a uniform, but on a thoroughly haphazard and inequitable system. In our judgment, the first step to be taken is to bring into existence machinery which will secure a uniform and adequate valuation on equitable principles of the whole of the property of the country. We are awaiting the Report of the Poor Law Commission, which we hope to have this year or the beginning of the next. I think it will lay the foundation for distinguishing between site value and the value of improvements, and in that way will provide an additional source of revenue for the discharge of purely local burdens. Assuming that these preliminary steps will be taken, as I hope they will be, completely and effectively, we come to what is the crux of the whole problem. How, and by what principle ought you to discriminate, not between local and national expenditure, but between local expenditure locally administered, and national expenditure locally administered? That is a most difficult problem. Let me assume for the purpose of my argument that that distinction has been established. There remains the question of how to meet the charges properly locally administered and properly locally chargeable. Certainly I am not a great admirer of our present rating system, even if based on a proper system of valuation. There is the problem of how to increase from local sources the revenue at present derived from the rates. I have suggested one source from which additional revenue may possibly come. I doubt whether you will find successful any attempt to bring personalty within the scope of the local rating law. Personalty is not local in its nature, in its origin, or in what I might call its permanent domicile and residence. It is an illusory fluctuating mobile thing, which is earned in one place, spent in another, and accumulated in a third; and any attempt to fix down a specific part of a man's property as that share of his personalty which should contribute to the local expenses of the place where he resides or carries on his business is a task which I doubt is capable of accomplishment. I do not look with much hope upon any scheme of that kind, nor do I think it would be possible to localise Schedule A, but I will not give my reasons now. For the local expenditure which is ultimately to be chargeable locally you will have to rely first, on an improved system of rating, and, secondly, upon additional revenue to be derived from some system of taxation of site values. But that is, after all, not the problem which interests us particularly to-night. I come to the endeavour to answer the question. How are you to discriminate between local services in the strict and narrower sense, and those services which, though locally administered, are of a national character, and towards which, therefore, the Imperial Exchequer, though not discharging the whole, is required to make some contribution? There are two or three very plain principles which it seems to me ought to regulate any action which takes place in regard to this. In the first place, if we are to combine, as we must combine, the continuance of local administration with an increase in Imperial contribution, it is perfectly clear that localities must continue to discharge some substantial share of the obligation, otherwise you will find yourself landed in an absolutely paradoxical situtaion; money would be contributed by one set of people and expended by another who had no responsibility of any sort or kind towards those who forwarded the money. All experience shows that that is in the long run extravagant and inefficient. If you are to combine a thing like education, which I agree is one of those services which may be described as national in their character, if you are to have what is called local control over the administration of education in our public elementary schools, it is quite clear that the whole cost of education cannot be thrown on the Exchequer. The same thing applies to the Poor Law, which again, I think, is a national service; and to any other specimens of the same class. That, I think, is perfectly plain. Then the next principle I lay down, and here I am in entire agreement with both my hon. friends, is this, that whatever form your subvention takes it should not be, as unfortunately it has been, by the allocation specificially of Imperial taxes to local purposes. We have had a good many years' experience of this system, and I think it was the general consent of all parties that I obtained consent last year to sweep it away. Instead of allocations of taxes to local purposes, your Imperial contribution ought, I am satisfied, to take the form of a subvention—that is to say, of a grant in aid of these national services performed by local authorities, subject to the condition that the central authority is able from time to time to satisfy itself by proper means that those services are being efficiently and economically administered on the spot. In other words, your Imperial contribution ought to take the form of a grant, but it ought to be a grant not of a specific tax, but for a specific purpose; not a general grant in aid of the expenditure of the local authorities, but a grant for some specific purpose. It follows from that that the Central Authority ought to have adequate power to see that the specific purpose is being accomplished in the hands of the local auhtority. To give an illustration, such a form ot subvention as the exemptions by the Agricultural Rates Act is altogether to be deprecated. That form of subvention is the worst of all forms, because it is distributed in a perfectly haphazard and uneven fashion, falling with undeserved leniency on places whose needs are not great, while starving places whose needs are really urgent. I have sketched what, in my view and that of my colleagues, ought to be governing lines on which the problem is to be met. I am most anxious to have an early opportunity of dealing with it, but I repeat I cannot put the matter in train for legislative solution until, first, having last year swept aside the cumbrous system of assigned revenue, we next get a proper system of valuation in working order, and so can do even-handed justice not only as between the Imperial Exchequer and the ratepayers of the country, but also as regards the localities.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): The right hon. Gentleman has admitted to the full the grievances of the ratepayers which has been so plainly put before the House; he has admitted the grievance of agriculture itself, and thinks that in the course of time this, too, ought to be dealt with. This is, indeed, an agreeable change since the days when we were engaged in passing the Agricultural Rates Act. Then the grievance of agriculture was not admitted, and the Government of the day were taunted with giving doles. All the evidence since then shows clearly that the whole of the benefit given under that Act has gone straight into the pockets of those for whom it was intended—the occupiers of the land. [" No."]

MR. ASQUITH: I thought I had made it perfectly clear that my opinion is that the Agricultural Rates Act is the very worst measure of this sort that could be passed.

MR. CHAPLIN: That expression of opinion adds to my wonder that the right hon. Gentleman has not repealed the Act. The first step, we are reminded, must be the facing of a Valuation Bill. That is an absolute essential, and, so far as I have been able to follow him, the right hon. Gentleman has given us no indication whatever when that Valuation Bill is going to be introduced, and when it is going to be carried. That fact is quite sufficient to satisfy my curiosity or anxiety on the point, but I doubt whether it is sufficient to satisfy the mover and seconder of this Resolution.

MR. ASQUITH: It is in the King's Speech.

MR. CHAPLIN: I read many things in the King's Speech which never come to anything. I think I gathered from the right hon. Gentleman that we shall, at all events, have to wait for the Report of the Royal Commission which is now sitting upon the Poor Law. Agriculture is not the only industry which has a grievance. The Report of 1901, to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, teems with evidence as to the grievances which the ratepayers suffer at present. In its very earliest pages, if I remember aright, it deals with those services which it calls onerous and national services. It includes Poor Law and education. The police, I think, is another. The Report lays down that these services ought to be dealt with with as little delay as possible, and yet the right hon. Gentleman has held out no hope that there is any immediate, or even distant, prospect of his dealing with the question at all. What are his remedies when it is to be dealt with? He has examined the question of calling in personalty, and making it contribute its fair share to the rates, and after full consideration, he has come to the conclusion that personalty will not do, and that it must be set on one side. The right hon. Gentleman falls back on one thing. He looks to what he calls site values by which a real and serious contribution can be obtained. Has the right hon. Gentleman ever examined the Report of the evidence on this subject?

MR. ASQUITH: Frequently.

MR. CHAPLIN: Then I wonder that he did not tell the House something about it. It is diametrically opposed to his view. First of all there is a great difficulty as to the cost of these proceedings. I looked at the Report this afternoon, and endeavoured to refresh my memory. There is any amount of evidence upon it, and out of all the evidence of surveyors and valuers who dealt with the question, I could only find three witnesses of importance who favoured the plan of the right hon. Gentleman, and seemed to think that it was practicable. I will quote some of the opinions expressed by witnesses—

> Mr. Cross, surveyor and valuer of Manchester, thought that, though it would not be actually impossible to put a separate figure upon the value of a site and a structure, it would be exceedingly difficult, and that it was not really a proposal which could be put into actual practice, and, in any event that it would not be worth while owing to the cost.
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> Mr. Mathews, land agent and surveyor, of Birmingham, thought that though it was possible to put a separate value on site and structure it was not practicable, as it would involve an inquiry into the most productive use the land could be put to. He also thought that the proposed system would give rise to endless litigation.
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> Mr. F. W. Hunt, architect, agent, and surveyor, of London, also stated that though a valuation of site and structure was possible, he considered that the proposal was not a practicable one.
>
> Mr. H. A. Hunt said it would probably cost several millions to value the sites in London if experts were employed. He also thought that the cost of the litigation might come to as much as the primary valuation if it were indifferently done.
>
> Mr. Wainwright asserted that it would be impossible to value the sites at 1s. apiece, and that the valuation of half a million houses would cost over two millions.

What sort of a valuation are you to have? If you want a fair and reasonable valuation, in which all the circumstances shall be taken into consideration, it must inevitably be a very serious matter with regard to the cost. I have the greatest possible doubts as to the value of the remedies suggested by the right hon. Gentleman even when he is able to try them. Upon that point we have no information whatever. We have absolutely nothing held out to us except that the right hon. Gentleman very plainly and distinctly states that he will have nothing to do with the acceptance of the word "immediate" in the Resolution. I think that is a not unreasonable disclaimer on his part. This question, I frankly admit, has been postponed a great number of years. It is not for me to say why that has been. Certainly so far as I am concerned, having been President of the Local Government Board at the time the Commission was appointed, no charge can be brought against me since the Report was published. I do wish to impress on the right hon. Gentleman that this is a grievance which is growing day by day on the minds of the ratepayers of the country. It is one of those questions which must be dealt with and cannot be indefinitely postponed. As regards agriculture the right hon. Gentleman must remember that although considerable advantage was given to the agricultural interest at the time by the passing of the Agricultural Rates Act, in many cases the whole of that advantage has been swept away already by the large increase of other rates which has taken place since then. I believe it to be an actual fact at the present moment that it would not be difficult to produce instances where agriculturists are worse off to-day than they were before the Agricultural Rates Act was passed owing to the enormous increase of rates which has occurred. I am bound to say that having listened to the right hon. Gentleman's speech, it appears to me to be of the smallest possible value. It holds out no hope or encouragement with regard to the future. The only remedy on which the right hon. Gentleman relies, even when he is able to attempt to deal with the question, would prove to be worthless, but as to the time when he is going to attempt to put that remedy into operation he has given no indication whatever. I can only say that I am bitterly disappointed at the right hon. Gentleman's speech.

*MR. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes) said that he could not help thinking that the Motion must meet with very general sympathy from all sides of the House, for as he read it, it was not brought forward in the interests of any single class in the community. Was there any hon. Member, be his constituency what it might, who could deny that the whole question of rating cried out for legislative consideration? But the question must be considered from a more comprehensive point of view. If they perused election addresses at the last general election, they would find in them an all but unanimous consensus of opinion amongst candidates that the rates were at present charged with certain responsibilities which were really matters of national concern, and so should be a charge upon the national purse. For instance, could it be denied that education was a national concern? Surely education was as much a national service as were the Army and Navy. Their continued efficiency as a nation, their continued pre-eminence in the markets of the world, and therefore, their continued prosperity depended as fully on the average mental equipment and development of the people as they did upon the efficiency of the defensive forces of the Crown. Especially was that so in these days when their great commercial rivals, the United States and Germany, were straining every nerve to outstrip them in the field of educational efficiency. As he had said, he did not wish to consider the question from the point of view of any single class, but as representing an agricultural constituency, he could not refrain from saying what a hardship it was that the ratepayers in the country districts should be called upon to provide an education which unfitted the children for country life, how unfair it was that the farmer and small holder should have to pay the bulk of the local contribution to an educational system which tended to their own discomfiture. He would not pursue the subject, but would only now ask the assent of hon. Members to the proposition that educational efficiency was a national interest, and so should be a national charge, at any rate to a greater extent than it was at present. Then there was the question of the expense of the maintenance of the poor. He had high authority for saying that the cost of maintaining the poor was not equitably distributed at present. It was Mr. Gladstone who had said that it was impossible to look at the nature of the tax for the support of the poor without being struck with the inequality of its incidence. The relief of the poor was a purpose for which, as far as could be done, all property, and not one description of property only, should be liable. Now the ever increasing proportions of the county rate must give sincere concern to those who studied such matters. If that increase were analysed, it would be found that it had occurred principally under the headings of (1) Education; (2) Maintenance of pauper lunatics; (3) Main roads. His experience in these matters was confined to Devonshire, and he had found that the education rate had increased from £166,360 in 1905, to £193,287 in 1907, but this was not the whole of the story, for the county debt had increased from £141,500 in 1890, to £307,589 in 1907, and this increase had been mainly due to an education loan of £142,636. Putting aside education, with regard to the second heading, pauper lunatics, many thought that they should be a charge upon the public purse to a greater extent than at present. It was true that the State did contribute to their maintenance, but counties and boroughs were now compelled to erect palatial edifices as lunatic asylums. The requirements of the Lunacy Commissioners were always increasing. In view, therefore, of the fact that counties and boroughs were not masters of their own expenditure in this connection, in view of the fact that the central body dictated that expenditure, it seemed to him that the national purse should defray its cost. He passed from that part to the third heading, the question of the cost of main roads. In Devonshire the expenditure on main roads had increased from £24,000 in 1890 to £72,000 in 1907. That was a terrible increase. Could there be found any to contend that in these days of motors, the cost of keeping main roads in fit order, a cost which had risen enormously through motor traffic, should fall, not on those who destroy the roads as fast as they were mended, but on the unfortunate agriculturists who lived in the vicinity of these roads? Prior to the introduction of railroads, when there was a considerable through traffic along these roads, the cost of their maintenance was defrayed by means of turnpikes. With the advent of railroads that through traffic had died out, and the turnpikes has been done away with, but with the introduction of motors a great through traffic had once more developed itself along the main roads of the country, and it was manifestly unfair to compel the locality to keep up these roads for strangers to destroy. The rural population admittedly suffered very great inconvenience and discomfort, yes, and in many cases even serious injury, through the stream of motor traffic along the main roads, and it was the height of irony to make this injured population pay for the maintenance of these roads in order to facilitate the advent of motor traffic which they loathed. All must admit that this was quite indefensible. As an owner of a motor car himself, he thought owners of motor cars should be anxious to see an alteration of this state of affairs. They recognised that motor traffic could never be as popular as it ought to be, and that the motor industry would not advance as it should so long as the present state of things existed. He was on the executive of a large automobile club, and he spoke on their behalf, and he believed on behalf of the general run of motor-owners, when he said that they would be prepared to submit to an increased tax on motors, but on the distinct understanding that the money should be allocated to the provision of sound, smooth, mudless, and well made roads. [Laughter.] Hon. Gentlemen might laugh; but there was no reason why our roads should not be made efficient. He maintained that there were main roads throughout the country which fell very far short of what they should be and what they were in Germany and France, where they were constructed on the best scientific principles. He would remind right hon. Gentlemen that they had recently passed an Act involving local expenditure under a new heading. A year or so ago they provided for the medical inspection of school children. Now if this was properly done, it would involve considerable expenditure, especially in the country districts. Even in Plymouth it involved the increase of the remuneration of the medical inspector by £300 a year, and there, of course, all the schools were concentrated within a small area. The cost would be very much greater in the country districts, where the schools were scattered over a large tract of country. He believed he was right in saying that there were 20,000 school children in the administrative county of Devon, that was Devonshire, excluding Plymouth, Devonport, Exeter, Barnstaple, and Torquay In view of this considerable expenditure, the Devon Education Committee had unanimously passed a motion praying that it should be a charge upon the national purse, and as the proposer of that resolution had been Sir Thomas Acland, a gentleman whose name might almost be said to be historic as far as West-country Liberalism was concerned, he had some hopes that the Government would listen to the prayer of the petition. He had pointed out three respects in which local ratepayers were saddled with an unjust burden. Other instances might be adduced in this connection. He would not, however, labour these points. He had said enough to show how urgent was the need for inquiry into this branch of the subject. Then, as he had already said, the whole question of the incidence of local taxation should be attended to. All must wish that the burden of the rates should fall upon individuals in proportion to their ability to pay. Did it so fall? No one for one moment could contend that it did so. Their present system was a survival of the days of old, when there was but one form of property, real property, land and houses, visible property. Their present antique system shut its eyes to the fact that the bulk of the wealth of the country was represented by personal property. Personal property was three or four times as great in volume as real property, and under these circumstances he hoped the House would agree that it was manifestly unjust to impose local taxation, and especially to impose local taxation for national objects, exclusively upon real property. The Agricultural Rating Act was a very crude method of endeavouring to remedy this state of affairs, which Mr. Gladstone himself, let him say, had been wont to characterise as an injustice; and very rightly did he so characterise it, for what were the rates originally? They were intended to be a kind of local income-tax under which all were to contribute to local objects according to their incomes reckoned by what they owned in the parish. People had to pay on all kinds of property, real and personal. For long the tax had been fairly collected, but in time, owing to the difficulty of estimating income derived from property other than real property, it gradually grew to be the custom to levy rates only on owners and occupiers of land and houses, property which was easily seen and valued, and so it came about that the retired merchant or manufacturer, the owner of personal property, escaped altogether from paying the rates in proportion to his means. In consequence of complaints the whole matter was referred in 1841 to a Court of law, which laid down that all should contribute to the rates in proportion to their means, whether their incomes were derived from real or personal property. This was a serious blow to the owners of personal property, and being an influential class they succeeded in inducing the Parliament of the day to pass a law relieving them altogether from the payment of rates in respect of personal property, and throwing the whole burden of the rates on the owners and occupiers of land and houses. At the same time it was felt that this was rather rough on the latter class, and accordingly the operation of the Act was limited to a single year, so that the whole subject might be reconsidered; but so far from the matter being reconsidered, for over sixty years Parliament had annually passed an Act exempting the owners of personal property from payment of rates according to their means, which the law of the land would otherwise have compelled them to do. There was the injustice. For over sixty years the owners and occupiers of land and houses had been paying their own share of the rates and that of the owners of personal property as well. The Agricultural Rating Act had been denounced by many as a dole, but how could this so-called dole, conferred by the Agricultural Rating Act, compare with the dole annually presented to the owners of personal property by the yearly Act conferring upon them total exemption from rating in respect of that personal property. It was not as if it was a Party matter. The injustice of the incidence of the rates had been recognised by all parties, by Mr. Gladstone himself, and even by the Liberal Commission which looked into the matter under the Chairmanship of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. It was an extraordinary thing that the general public should imagine that because half the rates on agricultural land were paid by the State, that therefore agriculture was treated with peculiar indulgence. Nothing could be more untrue. The agricultural industry was treated with gross injustice in this connection, and was singled out as no other industry was, to bear an unjust burden. It could not be too often repeated that those who got their living from the land did not want exceptional treatment. They were not in love with the Agricultural Rating Act. They recognised that it was a crude, a rough and ready method of dealing with the difficulty. All they asked was that their industry of agriculture, which, after all, was the most important industry in the country, should not be treated more harshly than any other industry. All they asked was that the raw material and stock-in-trade of the industry should not be specially singled out for taxation, while the raw material of all other industries was specially exempted. The peculiar thing was that while so many of those who sat on the opposite side of the House were up in arms at the suggestion of the slightest taxation of the foreign importer of agricultural produce, they were wholly indifferent to the ever-increasing burden of taxation which was being heaped upon the home producer. They did not mind taxing him. Could they not see that such unjust taxation was constantly adding to the English agriculturist's expenses of production, and that by forcing him to pay unjust taxes to which the foreigner was not subjected, they were protecting the foreign producer in their home markets and unfairly handicapping the home producer in his competition with the foreigner. Were not those who got their living from the land rightly imbued with a sense of injustice in this connection? Let them take a concrete instance. He would like before he sat down to give a concrete instance of an injustice. They might have a capitalist, a retired manufacturer living in a rural district in a villa rated at £100, he having an income of from £5,000 to £6,000, derived from investments. Next door to him was a yeoman farmer, farming his own land of 250 acres, the farmhouse buildings and agricultural land being rated at £250. The profits of the latter, under very favourable circumstances, would not amount to more than a hundred pounds or two. Perhaps he might have a struggle to make both ends meet, and yet he contributed to local purposes more than double what was required of his neighbour who had an income of several thousands a year. Did the farmer get more advantage out of this local expenditure? No, the capitalist with his motor-car, horses and carriages, got more use out of and did more damage to the roads. The protection of the police was more essential to the rich man's house than to the farmer's house. All must agree that the position was indefensible. There was now a unanimous desire to increase the number of small holdings in the country. Could not hon. Gentlemen see how such unjust burdens militated against the success of small holdings? Could it be denied that excessive local taxation had been a great factor in the disappearance of small holdings, and had contributed to rural depopulation? As he had said, the Agricultural Rates Act was a rough-and-ready method of dealing with the difficulty; it was not satisfactory. Agriculturists did not ask for exceptional treatment, but they were entitled to ask for that justice which Mr. Gladstone and all great financial authorities had admitted had long been denied them in this connection. The right hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in speaking for the Government, had just now said that at any rate his party was not responsible for the neglect of this question, because it was only in the year 1901 that the Commission reported in favour of a reform in the incidence of local taxation, but surely he was not entitled to urge that plea. The question had been an urgent one long before 1901, and he found corroboration of his views in the words spoken by the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Wolverhampton, a member of the present Government, in 1883. He had said, "Why should taxation be assessed on only one description of property, when the expenditure is for the benefit of all?" Twenty-five years ago the right hon. Gentleman had asked "Why?" And echo had continued to answer "Why" ever since. Let him, however, disavow any intention of bringing forward this Amendment in the interests of the agricultural community alone. Local taxation pressed unfairly at many points, and he claimed the support of a strong contingent of opponents in that House who were of opinion that the system of rating machinery required looking into. There were many conflicting opinions in regard to that question, but all were agreed upon one point. The system under which machinery was rated was a huge muddle, and required elucidation. Nobody could defend the present happy-go-lucky method of rating machinery. The difference of practice in different parts of the country was indefensible, and severely handicapped many manufacturers in their competition for the favour of the market. He could not go into the question at length that evening. He was not competent to do so, but there were all sorts of subsidiary questions in this connection which cried out for settlement. For instance, there was the question of rating unfixed machinery. No one could say what was really the law as to the rating of machine tools on manufacturing premises. He would not say more than that all would agree that the practice of the law with regard to the rating of machinery was so uncertain as to be a serious handicap in many industries, and he claimed the support that evening of all those who were of this persuasion. He felt that he had spoken at some length, though there was much more that might be said. The right hon. Gentleman who had spoken for the Government, had expressed sincere sympathy with the terms of the Resolution, and he said that it was a matter which must be dealt with, although it could not be dealt with immediately. That would seem to be satisfactory, but unfortunately that was what every Government had been saying for thirty years past. All Governments had in the past put off consideration of this question. For years past it had been admitted by successive Governments that our system of local taxation was chaotic, and that being so he was asking the House to declare that it was the duty of the Government of to-day to tackle the question, not to keep putting it off, to face the difficulty and to deal with it boldly.

*MR. LUKE WHITE (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose) said he would not occupy the House more than two or three minutes, because he found that from all quarters of it there was a disposition to accept this Motion, which had already been accepted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Anyone who had any acquaintance of local taxation could come to no other conclusion than that the time had arrived when the whole question should be discussed and dealt with. With regard to the question of agriculture, to which so much allusion had been made that evening, he might say that, representing a large agricultural constituency, he felt that agriculture especially had great complaint to make with regard to the existing burdens which had been placed upon that industry. The Royal Commission which reported in 1901 made it quite clear that some attempt should be made in order to lessen the burdens upon agriculture which then and still existed. He did not think he need occupy the attention of the House that night with any remarks as to the mode and manner in which Parliament should deal with this question of the incidence of local taxation. He was very glad indeed to find that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made it clear that he agreed with the Report of the Royal Commission that there was now placed upon local rates an expenditure for various services which were national in their character. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had alluded to Poor Law relief as being a national service, and also to the fact that education was a national service, and that various other services the expense of which was borne by the localities were national in their character. That was a very great admission to be made by a Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he agreed that in altering or reforming the system of local taxation, the people of this country must have grants from the National Exchequer equivalent to or very largely equivalent to the expenditure incurred by them in these services. He wished to make an appeal to the Government to deal with this question. It was true that for the last fifty or sixty years Motions had been passed in this House calling for a remedy or a reform with regard to the system of our local taxation. But nothing had been done. In 1901 the Royal Commission reported, but before they had made their Report to this House, the Government promised to bring in a Bill which was absolutely necessary to deal with the whole question, and the first step in dealing with the reform of local taxation as was mentioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was to pass a Valuation Bill. He had the privilege in the last Parliament of hearing a promise in the King's Speech each session to bring in a Valuation Bill. It was true that in the last Parliament the right hon. Member for South Dublin, then President of the Local Government Board, did bring in a Bill for that purpose, and that Bill might and would be in the future a very difficult and complex measure. This was a difficult matter, but it had to be faced, and he now hoped that his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board would bring in this Valuation Bill at the earliest opportunity. It would be a measure that between its First and Second Reading would have to be considered by the local authorities throughout the country, and the ratepayers and taxpayers throughout the land. It would be a measure which would require great consideration, and therefore it was necessary that it should be brought in and discussed at the earliest possible moment. He appealed to his right hon. friend to give some promise to-night as to when he would be able to introduce this measure, because it would have to become law before local taxation could be dealt with. As Parliament thought the time had come when the problem of local taxation should be dealt with he trusted the House would now support him in his appeal.

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.) said that the hon. Member for the Totnes Division had referred to the fact that for sixty years an Act had been renewed every year to set aside the power of the overseers to rate the citizens according to their ability to pay. Since this Parliament had assembled he had endeavoured to raise the question when, under the Expiring Laws Continuance Act, the Act came up for renewal. On that occasion he endeavoured to obtain from the Chancellor of the Exchequer some word of hope for the ratepayers of the cities and towns of the kingdom who were groaning under burdens which were almost too heavy to bear. On that occasion he failed to obtain such a promise as would bring the relief for which he had hoped. On this occasion he trusted the House would receive something more tangible than anything they had obtained previously. That was still to come, if it came at all, because the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not bear any construction that was likely to be of importance to the over-burdened ratepayers for some time to come. The first word he would like to say was that the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer contained a rather deprecating reference to the idea of rating according to ability to pay. It was, however, somewhat late in the day to say it was impossible to rate according to ability when those who had read anything of the literature on the subject knew full well that in Germany rating according to that principle was already in operation. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Local Government Board were no doubt aware, in German cities there was some arrangement which gave municipalities some advantage in the shape of the imposition of an income-tax for local purposes. That was what he and some of his friends would like to see put into operation in this country, and if it could be done in Germany it could certainly be done here. With reference to the right hon. Gentleman's statement as to the taxation of site values, he did not desire to be misunderstood, because he was one of those who believed in the taxation of site values, but he could not think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was right in endeavouring to lead the House to believe that there would be any very serious and tangible relief accruing to the ordinary ratepayer through such taxation. The theory of the Solicitor-General for Scotland with reference to the taxation of site values was that there should be a transference of rating from the property to the land. That merely meant a shifting of the burden. The hon. and learned Gentleman was of opinion that all local rates should be placed on the land value. If such a step were taken no increase in the amount of revenue could be expected. The property owner as such apart from the land would be released, and the land would bear the whole burden. But he would like to point out that in nearly every municipality in the kingdom, the rates were greater in amount than it was possible to put on the land value. He had in mind a municipality which recently was rated at 9s. in the £. If they took as an average the land values at one third of the total rateable value, it was evident that the whole of the land values would be taken by the municipality under such a system. He wanted to know as early as possible what was the view of the Government on that matter. He did not think that hon. Members opposite should go about the country declaring that the Party to which they belonged were in favour of the total confiscation of land values unless the Ministerial Bench were also in favour of it. He would like to know exactly where they were. It would be interesting to find out. The taxation of site values would not bring an increase unless it was placed upon the owner of sites as an extra burden. If it was an extra tax put on the owners of property and sites there would be an extra revenue, but if it was merely to take burdens from the owners of other forms of property there would be no such relief. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked the overburdened ratepayer to wait until that precious Poor Law Commission had reported. That Commission had sat a long time. The end was not yet clearly in sight, and meanwhile the injustice pressed heavily on those concerned. Let them take the case of a professional gentleman who needed only for the purposes of his business perhaps a couple of offices, and who was making perhaps a thousand or two thousand a year. A poor shopkeeper who was obliged to occupy commodious premises might be struggling with adversity and hardly able to make ends meet and yet might be paying £100 a year or more in rates. The amount was almost unlimited according to the nature of his business. There was nothing fair in that. And further it was becoming the custom in manufacturing towns for large capitalists to escape the obligation of holding and running machinery by simply taking an office and putting their work out at the lowest possible price to impecunious owners of machinery, who were bound to take the work at whatever price they could get. For instance, a loom if it stood for a week might cost the person responsible for it 7s. in standing charges. He could not afford to let it stand, and he cut the loss. The rich man who had made himself a factor sat in his office and waited for the manufacturer to come to him at his wits end, and then squeezed all the profit he could out of him. But that man was let off with a very small payment every year. That could not be right. It was not tolerable. The increasing tendency to pass laws excellent in themselves but providing no money, ought to be taken into account in a discussion of this kind. They had passed the Feeding of School Children Bill. How many authorities had put it into operation? Many of them had hesitated for fear of the intolerable burden of the rates. Something must be done to give help and succour to the municipalities that had extra burdens of that kind placed upon them. Money was also needed for the Medical Inspection Act. It was all very fine for that Assembly in righteous and virtuous fits to pass laws and hand them coolly over to localities to put them in operation without supplying the money. The position was coming to a climax. Municipalities which were doing their best for the public good found they came against this dead wall of inability to find the necessary money. He trusted the President of the Local Government Board would go a little further than the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*MR. STUART (Sunderland) said that the right hon. Gentleman had placed before the House the claim of agricultural districts for consideration under such a measure as this. As far as he had been able to gather, the speeches had dealt chiefly with the agricultural difficulty. He would like for a moment to divert the attention of the House to another matter which deserved attetion. He would take as an illustration an instance which he knew well, the case of the county of Norfolk and the city of Norwich. Before the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896 was passed the rates in Norwich were 8s. 8d., and the rates in the county was 2s., and the relief that was given to the rates in the city was 16 per cent, of its expenditure, while the relief given to the county was 28 per cent. of its expenditure. In the county there was practically the same amount of rateable house property as there was of rateable agricultural land, so that the remainder of the expenditure, which was 72 per cent., was borne half by agricultural land and half by house property. Under the Agricultural Rating Act the county was relieved of an additional 18 per cent, of its expenditure, making a total of 46 per cent., while the city continued to be relieved only to the extent of 16 per cent. Therefore, there was great inequality between the relief given to the county and that give to the city. That was a fair sample of many cases, and he hoped that agricultural relief would not be the only plea heard in that House, more particularly as the Royal Commission was the product of circumstances such as he had described. The right hon. Gentleman who was then President of the Local Government Board, admitted that a large concession had been made in relief of agriculture by the Act, and he set up the Commission with the object of seeing what could be done for urban districts. He warned the Chancellor of the Exchequer against meeting the difficulties by a too free expenditure from the Consolidated Fund, as the tendency of such relief was to help in the long run the owner of the site value and not the occupier for whose relief it was primarily intended. There were two Reports from the Royal Commission, and among the signatures to the Minority Report was that of the Chairman, Lord Balfour. That Minority Report expressed the view that site values could be taxed, and went so far as to say that they ought to be taxed, that accompanying grants there should be a site value rate, the tendency of which would be to fall on owners, and the benefit of the subventions would be secured to those for whom it was intended, the occupiers. When they requested the Chancellor of the Exchequer to mitigate their difficulties by paying out of the general fund of the country, it should be remembered that unless something was done corresponding to what the Minority Report of the Royal Commission represented as necessary, what was done would, he was afraid, be a gift of the hard earned money of the general population to the owners of site values in towns. The persons who appeared to get the benefit were the occupiers, but it slipped through them like sand through an hour-glass into the pockets of the site owners. It was on the site owners that the rate ultimately fell, and therefore to them that relief to the rate ultimately accrued. A good system of valuation was the first necessity. The present system was absurd and ridiculous. A system of separate valuation of sites would be easily and successfully accomplished.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said the debate had shown remarkable unanimity in one respect. No one had said a word on behalf of the present rating system. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that this was another demand upon him, and that it was intended to make something out of the Imperial Exchequer. That was quite true, but it seemed to him that there was a difference between this and certain other demands. They were not asking the right hon. Gentleman to draw more deeply on the national funds as he was asked to do in connection with other schemes which had been proposed. On the contrary it was a transference of expenditure from one purse to another rather than any fresh expenditure which was being pressed upon him this evening. A good deal had been said about onerous and national services, but he thought what had been said did not really go to the root of the matter. If they were going going to follow out the suggestion in Sir George Murray's Report and only transfer the cost of one half of these services to the national Exchequer, the incidence of the other half would be as unjust as at present, and practically it would be no remedy. He could not understand why they should not transfer the whole of the cost of the national services to the Imperial Exchequer. There was a very excellent precedent in the action of the Secretary of State for War who had recently set up local bodies which were to be administered for national interests out of national funds. Poor relief, asylums, and education, could be so treated. The cry of want of economy if that were done would not really be a sound one, because so long as the money was devoted to particular purposes, and the Exchequer audited most carefully, there would be no room for extravagance. The second grievance of the ratepayers was that which owners of real property had against owners of personal property, and the third grievance was that felt by agriculturists against other forms of real property. This was a genuine grievance only partially remedied by the Agricultural Rates Act. Some hon. Members might think that that Act was crude, but, at all events, it had answered its purpose for the time being in affording farmers a substantial measure of relief. He could give a great number of instances of the complaints of farmers about the injustice which they felt on account of the burden of rates which fell so heavily upon them. He would not go into these, but he would take a hypothetical case and compare two men—one a farmer, and the other a tradesman, and both in a small way. He would suppose that the income of each was £100. A farmer, according to the income-tax schedule, was supposed to pay one-third of his rent as income-tax, and if he had an income of £100, it might be supposed that his rent would be £300. That was not an uncommon calculation. On the other hand, the tradesman would probably pay for his house one-fifth of his income, and, therefore, he thought that without unfairness it might be put down at £20. Therefore, a considerable disparity arose in the method of assessing these two men. Whereas the tradesmen paid rates only on £20, or making the usual deduction as to rents to be paid, on £16 13s. 4d. the farmer with the same income paid rates on house and buildings (say £30, less one-sixth), £25; agricultural land (half £270, less one-eighth), £118; total assessment, £143. Hon. Members would see that in the case of an education rate of 6d. the farmer would pay on that assessment, £3 11s. 6d. and the tradesman only 8s. 4d. That was an enormous difference and a grave injustice. The one paid eight and-a-half times more than the other towards the rates, in spite of the Agricultural Rates Act. Had it not been for that Act, the farmer would have paid seventeen times more than the tradesman with a similar income. When hon. Members talked as if the Agricultural Rates Act was a charitable gift from the nation to the agriculturist, they forgot how great was the injustice which had been inflicted, and how very partially that injustice had been relieved. He need not say this tax, which practically amounted to an excise duty on home-grown food, had been very deplorable in its results on agriculture. The fact that it was paid by the producer and not by the consumer did not make the hardship the less. When one reflected that it was the policy of both parties in the House to encourage the people to get

Viscount Helmsley.

back to the land, and to encourage agriculture as an important national industry, it was deplorable that that industry should labour under such grievous disadvantages compared with other industries. He should also like to point out that the whole difficulty arose from the fact that the farmer for the purpose of his trade needed more rateable property than other people for their trades. When members who represented urban districts pointed out the grievances which their constituents had to contend with, they who represented agricultural constituences did not wish to minimise their grievances. All they wished was a frank recognition of the grievances of the agriculturalist. The whole thing lay in a nutshell when it was remembered that in the case of a farmer his income was calculated as one-third of the rent, while in the case of other people their rent was calculated at one-fifth of their income. He hoped that some thing would soon be done to remedy this injustice, and that the word "immediately" would have a little more liberal interpretation from the Chancellor of the Exchequer than he had led the House to believe. He was sure that the sooner the Government—he was indifferent as to which side of the House it belonged to—took up this question the better it would be for the agricultural industry.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said he hoped that when this Government did take up this question they would devote their attention to the special recommendations made by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and other Commissioners with regard to different contributions of aid of rates in Ireland. An hon. Gentleman opposite had given striking figures in regard to the county of Norfolk, but he could give a companion picture of what occurred in two agricultural districts in Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had described the system of valuation and the system of grants-in-aid as hap-hazard and inequitable. That description was certainly not exaggerated. The valuation was such as to penalise all improvements, and it was incredible the burden which the rates put on the inhabitants of poor districts. It was impossible for these poor people to put up so much as a pig-stye without an appreciable difference being made on the rates. Again, the present manner of granting Exchequer contributions was such as to give relief where it was least needed. If hon. Members would refer to page 24 of Lord Balfour's Report they would find two extraordinary cases. In one the rateable value per head of the population was 13s., and the amount paid from the grant-in-aid was 1s. 3d. per head, while in the other case the rateable value was £12 13s. and yet the grant-in-aid per inhabitant was no less than 7s. 6d. In districts where the rateable value was very low it was impossible for the guardians and the district council to provide the merest decent accommodation for the sick poor.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of Local Taxation and the relations between Local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between Local and Imperial obligations."—(*Mr. Hedges.*)

POLLING ARRANGEMENTS (PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGHS) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

WORKMEN'S INSURANCE (GERMANY).

Return ordered, "Showing, in terms of English money, the latest available annual statement with reference to Workmen's Insurance in the German Empire against: (1) sickness, and (2) invalidity and old age; giving in each of the above classes of insurance: (1) the number of persons insured; (2) the number compensated; (3) receipts from all sources; (4) contributions from employers, contributions from employees, contributions from the State; (5) amount of expenses incurred; (6) amount of accumulated funds; and (7) average compensation per case."—(*Mr. Lewis Haslam.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills; and that such Committee do classify and prepare abstracts of the same, in such form and manner as shall appear to them best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and do report the same from time to time to the House; and that the reports of the Commitee do set forth, in respect of each Petition, the number of signatures which are accompanied by addresses, and which are written on sheets headed in every case by the prayer of the Petition; provided that on every separate sheet after the first the prayer may be reproduced in print or by other mechanical process:—And that such Committee have power to direct the printing *in extenso* of such Petitions, or of such parts of Petitions, as shall appear to require it:—And that such Committee have power to report their opinion and observations thereupon to the House.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. Edward Barry, Mr. Burt, Mr. Charles Craig, Mr. Ellis Griffith, Mr. Leicester Harmsworth, Mr. Henniker Heaton, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Wynford Philipps, Mr. Agar-Robartes, Mr. Charles Shaw, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Mr. Wills, and Mr. Henry Joseph Wilson.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

In pursuance of Standing Order No. 1, "Sittings of the House,"—I hereby nominate—

The right hon. Charles Beilby Stuart-Wortley,
Sir William Holland,
Mr. Charles Fenwick,
Mr. Alfred Hutton, and
Mr. Patrick Joseph Power

to act during this session as temporary Chairmen of Committees when requested by the Chairman of Ways and Means.

JAMES W. LOWTHER,
Speaker.

18*th February*, 1908.

Adjourned at five minutes afte
Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech denotes revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 19*th February,* 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway [H.L.]; London Electric Supply [H.L.]; London Motor Roadways Approach [H.L.]

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.]; London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.]—(Petition for additional Provision); Malvern Hills Bill [H.L.]; Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill [H.L.]; Ards and Bangor Railways Bill; Dover Graving Docks Bill; Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill.—Examiners' Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next.

Crystal Palace Company Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a}, and committed.

Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a}, and committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]; Audenshaw and Saddleworth Urban District Councils Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.]; London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Monmouthshire County Council Bill [H.L.]; Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Swansea Valley Gas Bill [H.L.]; Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [H.L.]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Pontypridd Water Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water Bill [H.L.]; Barry Railway Bill [H.L.]; Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]; Herne Bay Pier Bill [H L.]; Huddersfield Water Bill [H.L.]; Magee Presbyterian College (Londonderry) Bill [H.L.]; Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.]; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.]; Cardiff Railway Bill [H.L.]; London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Bill [H.L.]; Commercial Union Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

I. Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of—(Portsdown and Horndean Light Railway (Extension, etc.) Order, 1908). A light railway in the parish and rural district of Catherington, in the county of Southampton, in extension of the light railway authorised by the Portsdown and Horndean Light Railway Order, 1898, and for other purposes; (London and North Western Railway (Dyserth and Newmarket Light Railway) Order, 1908. A light railway in the county of Flint, from Dyserth to Newmarket.

II. Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, authorising the construction of light railways in the county of Salop, from Stottesdon to Billingsley.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION ACT, 1876, PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1897.

Joint Report, dated 22nd October, 1907, to the Secretary for Scotland and the Local Government Board for Scotland on the pollution of the river Leven (Dumbartonshire) by Mr. W. S. Curphey, Inspector under the Rivers Pollution Prevention Acts, and Dr. Dittmar, Medical Inspector to the Local Government Board for Scotland.

NAVY (BATTLE PRACTICE).

Result of battle practice in His Majesty's Fleet, 1907. Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1908.

Rules made by the Board of Trade, dated 12th February 1908.

COMMITTALS (IRELAND).

Returns from the Clerks of the Crown and Peace of the number of persons committed for trial in 1907.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION.

The Lords following, viz.—

M. Ripon.
(*L. Privy Seal.*)

D. Bedford.
D. Northumberland.

M. Lansdowne.

E. Lauderdale.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Rosse.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.

V. Churchill.

L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Granard.
(*E. Granard.*)
L. Denman.
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Newton.

with the Chairman of Committees, were appointed a Committee to select and propose to the House the names of the five Lords to form a Select Committee for the consideration of each opposed Private Bill.

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed for the consideration of such Public Bills as may be committed to it by the House.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

E. Jersey.
E. Waldegrave.

V. Churchill.

L. Balfour.

L. Granard.
(*E. Granard.*)
L. Denman.
L. Kintore.
(*E. Kintore.*)
L. Laurence.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Appointed: The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

E. Crewe.
(*L. President.*)

D. Bedford.
D. Marlborough.
D. Northumberland.

M. Lansdowne.
M. Salisbury.
M. Bath.

E. Derby.
E. Denbigh.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Jersey.
E. Lauderdale.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Cadogan.
E. Howe.
E. Amherst.
E. Camperdown.
E. Dartrey.
E. Lytton.
E. Carrington.

V. Sidmouth.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.

L. Zouche of Haryngworth.
L. Barnard.
L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Poltimore.
L. Kintore.
(*E. Kintore*)
L. Belper.
L. Brougham and Vaux.
L. Kinnaird.
L. Hylton.
L. Fermanagh.
(*E. Erne.*)
L. Herries.
L. Monkswell.
L. Newton.
L. Welby.
L. Ludlow.

All petitions relating to the Standing Orders which shall be presented during the present session referred to the Committee unless otherwise ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Select Committee appointed: The Lords following with the Lord Chancellor, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, and the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee—

D. Northumberland.
M. Bath.
M. Cholmondeley.
M. Breadalbane.

E. Beauchamp.
(*L. Steward.*)
E. Clarendon.
E. Chesterfield.
E. Waldegrave.
E. Spencer.
E. Mount Edgecumbe.
E. Belmore.
E. Cawdor.
E. Camperdown.
E. Ancaster.
E. Carrington.
E. Halsbury.
E. Plymouth.

V. Gordon.
(*E. Aberdeen.*)
V. Cross.
V. Peel.
V. Knutsford.
V. Churchill.
V. Selby.

L. Balfour.
L. Ribblesdale.
L. Colchester.
L. Rosebery.
(*E. Rosebery.*)
L. Kintore.
(*E. Kintore.*)
L. Belper.
L. Tweedmouth.
L. Monk Bretton.
L. Macnaghten.
L. Welby.
L. Burghclere.
L. Colebroke.

THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER.

LORD STANMORE rose to call the attention of the House to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Select Committee on the Decoration of the Palace of Westminster; and to ask whether His Majesty's Government propose to take any action based thereon. The noble Lord said: My Lords, it will be within the recollection of some of your Lordships that last year a Select Committee was appointed to inquire and report with respect to the unfinished condition of the rooms in the Palace of Westminster appropriated to the service of this House, and their approaches. That Committee duly reported, and the Report has been some time in the hands of your Lordships and of His Majesty's Government, and I am anxious to inquire whether it is the intention of the Government to take any action upon the recommendations of that Committee, or to put the Report away in a dusty pigeon-hole, into which so many other Reports have been placed in the past.

The Report of the Select Committee showed clearly that everything I had previously said in this House from time to time with regard to the unfinished condition of the Palace was absolutely correct, and that there is hardly an apartment in this Palace, with the exception of that in which we are now assembled and the Library, which is not more or less incomplete and unfinished. Familiarity with the existing state of things prevents our noticing it in the way that strangers do, but you may depend upon it that, satisfied as we may be with it, strangers are not satisfied, and many a jeer has been made at the condition of this Palace. The Report of the Committee went at great length into the condition of almost every part of the House, and described each apartment separately. I am not going to inflict anything like a repetition of that Report upon your Lordships at this time, but I would mention its principal recommendations, and those, I think, were of a very moderate nature.

The main recommendation was that, considering the unfinished state of the apartments, the work of gradually completing them should be recommenced, however slowly, and with whatever economy was desirable. They also recommended that some sort of advisory body should be appointed which should give something like continuity to the scheme, whatever it might be, to be carried out; and, although it might be impossible to reappoint such a Commission as originally took the matter in hand, some sort of committee or select body of advisors might be found who should prevent abrupt changes in the designs to be followed. The final recommendation, which I think was a very moderate one, was with regard to the work suggested to be commenced at once. They suggested that a beginning should be made in the third of the three corridors which lead out of the Central Hall, of which two are already filled with pictures, and the other having nothing on it but wallpaper. They recommended that in that corridor the work should be begun, and also that the two halls, the one at the bottom and the one at the top, with the great staircase, should be relieved of the unsightly fittings with which they are now disgraced. The fine chimneys of those apartments are hidden, one by a refreshment bar and the other by a receptacle for hat pegs, and the one fresco which has not been obliterated in the upper hall is defaced by having put before it, as if in irony, a huge telephone box, which hides a part of the picture, and is certainly not an object in the proper place. I believe the whole of that might be altered, and I understand that the estimate for that work and for providing accommodation for refreshments would not exceed £500, which is certainly not an enormous demand upon the revenues of the country.

Moreover, supposing that the work in that corridor were begun, the expense would not fall wholly upon the Government, for I believe there are two Members of your Lordships' House who are willing to present two of the pictures, provided always that the Government will do something, however small, towards the completion of the work. Those two panels will be furnished if the Government will say, not that they are going to spend a large sum of money this year or next year, but that they will take the scheme again into serious consideration, and spend a small sum of money in carrying it out. Those are the recommendations of the Committee. What are the answers which I shall probably receive? I am under no illusion in the matter. I know that it is most uphill work to go on year after year pressing this subject, but I do not despair of success in the end.

I suppose the answers that will be made to-night will be those usually given in reply to any Motion of this kind—first, that there is no money available; and, secondly, that people do not care about it and do not want it. I venture to think that both those answers are in the nature of excuses rather than reasons. As to the first, I have already said, and the Committee stated it clearly in their Report, that we do not desire that any great sum should be devoted to this purpose. It is impossible to say that this great country cannot afford a few hundred pounds to do a small bit of such useful work as that proposed; it is really making a laughing stock of the country to say we cannot afford a few hundred pounds to carry on, however slowly, the decoration of what is, after all, the great national Palace, wherein assemble the Houses of the Legislature. As to the other excuse, I not believe in it at all. I do not believe that the people at large would object to, or do otherwise than approve of, an expenditure upon the completion of this great national building. What they may not approve of is a large expenditure devoted to the personal comfort and luxury of Members of the House of Commons in the more private parts of the building, such as the smoking rooms, dining rooms, and tea rooms, on all of which large sums of money are spent, while nothing is expended upon those parts which are accessible to the public, which belong to the public, and which, I believe, the public would willingly, at some expense, see made worthy of the objects to which they are devoted.

I do not for one moment think that there would be any objection in the country to a moderate expenditure, spread over a number of years, upon the due decoration and adornment of this Palace. Another recommendation was that a Joint Committee of both Houses should be appointed, because the apartments devoted to the use of the House of Commons were necessarily excluded from the purview of this Committee. That may be a course which will commend itself to His Majesty's Government, but, at all events, I wish to inquire what it is they intend to do, whether they propose to proceed with the work or to leave the magnificent apartments of the Palace unfinished and unfit to be looked upon by visitors to this country.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE: My Lords, as I was a Member of this Select Committee I should like to say a word or two in support of my noble friend's request. The Committee had a great number of witnesses before them, men pre-eminent in different ways connected with the Fine Arts, practical and decorative. These witnesses, as was, perhaps, not surprising, differed very much as to the exact thing to be done, but they agreed in one thing, I think, with practical unanimity—namely, that this building was a noble building considered as a work of architecture, and that it was an immense pity, from that point of view, that it should be left in an unfinished and unworthy condition. That, I take it, may be the view expressed by all connected with the Arts, however much they differ in other matters, and I cannot believe that it is a view that would be disagreed with by large democratic bodies, because we see the sort of buildings that the largest and most democratic bodies build for themselves when they are their own masters.

Anybody who has visited the town halls of Glasgow or of Belfast will have seen the sort of building that large industrial bodies consider necessary and worthy to house their representative institutions. It would be a surprising thing to compare the finish and elaboration of those buildings with the really shabby second class waiting-room appearance of a great many of the rooms in this Palace. I quite expect the Government to tell us that there is no money, and I know that we must not discuss money matters in this House; but I cannot help thinking that it would be rather interesting to compare sums spent on purely decorative and not utilitarian purposes during the past year. I see that on refreshment kiosks in Regent's Park, £1,360 was spent; on putting up very ugly erections in the Mall, £18,000; on the decoration of the Spanish Embassy £50,000; on the Roman Embassy, £1,580; and on the Copenhagen ballroom, £800. No doubt all those things may be very well defended and may be very useful, but they are decorative, and I cannot think that the decoration of those places is more essential to the dignity and greatness of the country than the completion of the central Parliament House.

Not only that, but we see every day, in passing, the new offices which have sprung up and which, as far as I can judge, seem to be covered in an almost unneccessarily profuse manner with statuary, festoons, and towers. I feel that it is not too much to ask the Government to discriminate a little in the expenditure of the money they elect to lay out on ornamentation. There was another recommendation of the Committee which, I think, may possibly be an obstacle to the Government taking up the recommendations made, and that was with regard to the appointment of an independent advisory board. I have no right to speak for the Committee, but, speaking individually, I should be perfectly content if the Government would carry out a scheme of completion without an advisory committee or board. I think we may have full confidence in the Minister who at present has charge of the work. At least I have, and as he is in the House of Commons and it is open to any one in that House to question him and to object to what he does, I think his action might not be objected to in the same manner as the recommendation of a Committee of this House. Whatever the Government decide on that point, I do trust that, even if they are not able to do anything this year, they will give us some hope that the matter will not altogether be allowed to go to sleep.

VISCOUNT RIDLEY: My Lords, before the reply is given on behalf of His Majesty's Government might I ask them also to take into consideration a practical matter. I have the fullest sympathy with the question raised by the two noble Lords, but I also have a desire to see this Chamber clothed in a proper manner, and I consider that the state of the leather on these benches is not consistent with the dignity of the House of Lords, or, indeed, of any Legislative Assembly in the world. I hope, therefore, if the Government see their way to contribute towards the objects referred to, they will also take into consideration the spending of a little money to cover the absolutely worn benches which we see around us. I can fully understand the desire that the decoration of the building should be completed, but I hope the Government will press upon the Department chiefly concerned the importance, at any rate, of decently clothing what is already supposed to be complete.

THE EARL OF PLYMOUTH: My Lords, I feel a difficulty in rising from this Bench and supporting, as I wish to do, my noble friend who asked this Question, because I rather lay myself open to the retort that up till two years ago, and for several years before, we on this side were in a position to do something, and we did nothing, in answer to the appeals made by the noble Lord. But, my Lords, although I very much deplore that on those occasions I, as First Commissioner, was unable to give him a more favourable Answer, I should like now, being in a position of greater freedom, to support very warmly the object he has in view. It really is but a very small thing that the Committee which your Lordships appointed agreed to ask. The actual sum of money is a mere matter of detail. A very small sum set aside and used every year for the purpose of gradually continuing the decorations of the Palace would, in the end, and at no very distant date, accomplish what my noble friend has in view. One knows well enough what the difficulties of adding to the Estimates are, but I trust the noble Lord opposite will hold out some hope that a beginning in this direction may be made very soon.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, certainly nobody can complain of the noble Lord on the Cross Benches for having raised this little debate on a subject which, though not of first importance, yet is, at any rate, one of considerable interest to all the Members of your Lordships' House. It is perfectly true that since the Commission over which the Prince Consort presided with so much sympathy and ability was dissolved, very little has been done in the way of completing the decoration of this building. What little has been done has been done in rather a tentative and intermittent manner, and the noble Earl who has just sat down was good enough to make it quite clear, at the beginning of his speech, that at any rate no Party recriminations on this subject were possible. We are all equally to blame according to the number of years in which each side has been in charge of the finances of the country.

The noble Lord on the Cross Benches said that two reasons or excuses might be advanced for not at once starting the work. One of them was that we should allege that there is a general indifference on this matter. I do not admit that. I do not think there is a general indifference. It is, of course, perfectly true that when the whole business was dragged on for such a number of years, and when, as the noble Lord himself said, we have all got more or less habituated to the appearance of the various rooms as they are, there seems to be no particular reason for making a start at any particular moment; and so far only the noble Lord's argument may be a good one. He also said that we should say there is no money. That, of course, would not be literally true, but, at the same time, we are bound to say that at a time when very large demands for expenditure are being made, and when the general level of taxation is considered, at any rate by some people, to be quite high enough, a new Estimate for purely decorative purposes is a somewhat difficult matter to recommend to the House of Commons and to the country. The suggestion of the Committee was that a sum of £4,000 a year should be allotted for this purpose until the original scheme has been more or less completed.

On the point of the Advisory Committee, I do not wish to express any opinion at this moment. We are not, as the House will understand from what I have already said, able to recommend any expenditure this year, and therefore that particular point does not arise. The noble Lord on the Cross Benches spoke of the suggestion of a Joint Committee and pointed to the recommendation at the end of the Report that the House of Commons should be, if possible, interested in this matter. I very much regret now, and I think we on this side may take some blame on ourselves, that when the original Committee was appointed we did not suggest it should be a Joint Committee instead of a Committee of your Lordships' House. Joint Committees are not always very desirable or very successful bodies, but I am bound to say, on looking back, I think this is just the case for a Joint Committee, which would have served the purpose of interesting the Members of the House of Commons in a subject which, at present, they may possibly feel has been in some way rather removed from them.

I think it is only fair to my right hon. friend, the First Commissioner, to point out that he has done what he could to improve the condition of the building. He has devoted some attention both to the stone work and to the wood work, I think with results which commend themselves to the public taste. I am perfectly certain he will not do what the noble Lord on the Cross Benches is afraid of—that is, put the Report by in a dusty pigeon hole. We are not able to hold out any kind of promise now, but I can assure my noble friend that the matter will not be lost sight of, that it is one which we do regard sympathetically, and that we shall be very glad, indeed, if we find it possible to make some sort of start, if not on the exact lines of the Report, at any rate on lines which will commend themselves to the country. With regard to the seats in your Lordships' House, which the noble Viscount does not wish to see redistributed but re-covered, I will draw the attention of my right hon. friend to the regrettable condition of things to which he has referred.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I think we cannot regard the speech of the noble Earl as unsympathetic towards the request of the noble Lord on the Cross Benches. The Report of the Committee was one of great moderation. Indeed, having the dignity of this House very much at heart I would almost say it was too moderate in character, for we cannot visit the great rooms and halls in this building without realising that many things require to be done. The noble Earl Lord Carlisle, with perfect truth, drew attention to the fact that public bodies spare no expense in making their buildings dignified and in every way worthy of the objects to which they are put. Surely this great historic Palace should not be behind those buildings in regard to the completion of its decoration. I gathered from the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council, that the Government sympathise with the object of my noble friend on the Cross Benches. If the Government hold that view, I am at a loss to understand why they do not allocate annually at least a part of the sum required to carry out the Committee's suggestions. I am glad, however, to hear that the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works has this matter in view. So long as this great institution, the House of Lords, exists, and I believe it will exist for many generations to come, the place in which it meets should be maintained in a fitting state of dignity.

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

Lord EVERSLEY: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether the Government will lay before Parliament a report showing the proposal made at the Hague Conference for the abolition of the right of capture of private property at sea in time of war, and the discussion which took place upon it; and also a copy of the Paper referred to in Sir Edward Grey's letter of instructions to His Majesty's plenipotentiaries at the Congress, in which the arguments for and against the proposals were fully set out.

The UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord Fitzmaurice): My Lords, in reply to my noble friend I have to say that Papers will shortly be laid before Parliament which will contain the minutes of the plenary meetings of the Conference, and the reports of the committees laid before the Conference at these meetings. These Papers will be found to contain all the information which his Majesty's Government can properly make public now. They are not at present in a position to say whether the discussions held at the various subsidiary meetings of committees and sub-committees will be published eventually in whole or in part. This question, they understand, is under consideration at the Hague. Anything that is published there will, however, be placed in the library of both Houses of Parliament here. With regard to the particular question of the exemption of private property from capture, there were a large number of reports and memoranda placed at the disposal of the British plenipotentiaries which, in keeping with the usual practice in such matters, being of a confidential character, cannot be published.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: When will the Papers be laid?

Lord FITZMAURICE: I cannot give the exact date, as the Papers are very lengthy and contain matters in regard to which we naturally have to communicate with foreign Powers, but they will be laid as soon as possible.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, till Tomorrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 19*th February*, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Tyne Improvement Bill.—For conferring further powers on the Tyne Improvement Commissioners in reference to dredging. Presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

Madras Railway Company (Purchase) Bill [Annuities].—Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of the Revenues of India, of any Annuities created under any Act of the present Session to provide for the vesting of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company in the Secretary of State in Council of India, and of any costs, charges, and expenses incurred under such Act (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the transfer of training colleges in Scotland." [Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to the Clyde Navigation." [Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.]

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Ordered (under Section 7 of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered upon Friday.

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Ordered (under Section 7 of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) to be considered upon Friday.

PETITIONS.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Benholm, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation, from Batley, Carlisle, Clapton (three), Leeds (three), New Malden, Roundhay, Sedbergh, Stapleford, and Wirral; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Billy Row (two), Birmingham, Bristol, Chesterfield (two), Hull, Mansfield, Plymouth, Stockwell Green, United Effort Lodge, Wigton, and Woking; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Rules made by the Board of Trade under the Act [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

COMMITTALS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Returns from the Clerks of the Crown and Peace of the number of persons committed for trial in 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION ACT AND PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) ACT.

Copy presented, of Joint Report, dated 22nd October, 1907, to the Secretary for Scotland and the Local Government Board for Scotland, on the Pollution of the River Leven (Dumbartonshire), by Mr. W. S. Curphey, Inspector under the Rivers Pollution Prevention Acts, and Dr. Dittmar, Medical Inspector to the Local Government Board for Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NAVY (BATTLE PRACTICE).

Copy presented, of Result of Battle Practice in His Majesty's Fleet, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Bridlington Piers and Harbours, Copy of Abstract of the General Annual Account for the year ending 26th July, 1907 [by Act].

LAND REGISTRY.

Return ordered, "showing the work done in the Land Registry, in each of the years 1906 and 1907, respectively, under the various Acts hereinafter mentioned, namely:—1. Under the Land Transfer Acts, 1875 and 1897; (a) The number, value, and acreage (where known) of estates the titles of which were registered, on first registration, from the 1st day of January 1906 to the 31st day of December, 1907, showing the numbers of estates registered with absolute, qualified, and possessory title, and good leaseholds; and also the number of estates registered under The Small Holdings Act, 1892; (b) The total number of separate titles on the register on the 31st day of December 1907 (i.) by first registration, (ii.) by sub-division of estates already registered, and (iii.) by transfer from the 1862 register; (c) The total number of separate titles which have been removed from the register on the 31st day of December, 1907. 2. Under The Land Registry Act, 1862; (a) The total number, value, and acreage (where known) of estates the titles to which were registrated on first registration; (b) The total number of separate titles on the register on the 31st day of December 1907 (i.) by first registration, and (ii.) by sub-division of estates already registered; (c) The total number of separate titles which have been removed from the register on the 31st day of December 1907 otherwise than by transfer to the 1875 register. 3. Under both the Acts of 1875 and 1862; (a) The total number of separate titles on the register on the 31st day of December 1907; (b) The total number of transactions registered from the 1st day of January 1906 to the 31st day of December 1907, showing the numbers of (i.) first registration under the Acts of 1875 and 1897, (ii.) conveyances, transfers and transmissions of land, (iii.) mortgages, charges, further charges, and transfers of mortgages and charges, (iv.) reconveyances of mortgages and cessation of charges, (v.) leases and surrenders of leases, (vi.) miscellaneous. 4. Under the Mortgage Debenture Acts, 1865 and 1870, and The Improvement of Land Act, 1864. A statement, so far as may be practicable, of the nature and amount of the work done under these Acts from the 1st day of January, 1906, to the 31st day of December, 1907. 5. Under The Land Charges Registration and Searches Act, 1888, and The Land Charges Act, 1900. The number of registrations, official searches and ordinary searches made from the 1st day of January, 1906, to the 31st day of December, 1907. 6. Under the Middlesex Registry Act, 1708, and The Land Registry (Middlesex Deeds) Act, 1891. The number of registrations and searches made from the 1st day of January, 1906, to the 31st day of December, 1907. And showing the amount of fees received and the amount of salaries and expenses in the Land Registry from the 1st day of April, 1906, to the 31st day of March, 1907, distinguishing for the purposes of Section 22 of The Land Transfer Act, 1897, the fees received and salaries and expenses paid under the Land Transfer Acts and the other Acts above referred to (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 276, of Session 1906)."—(*Mr. Rowlands.*)

DEATHS FROM STARVATION OR ACCELERATED BY PRIVATION (LONDON).

Address for "Return of the number of Deaths in the administrative county of London, in the year 1907, upon which a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of Death from Starvation, or Death accelerated by Privation; together with any observations furnished to the Local Government Board by boards of guardians with reference to cases included in the Return (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 313, of Session 1907)."—(*Mr. Talbot.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Irish Ancient Monuments.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, what ancient monuments have been notified to the Board of Works as worth preserving by the Estates Commissioners since the passing of the Purchase Act of 1903; and which of them have been vested, or are proposed to be vested, in the Board of Works or in the Irish county councils in consequence of such notification.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to the reply to the honourable Baronet's Question of 27th May, 1907, which gives a list of 52 ancient monuments, particulars of which the Estates Commissioners had communicated to the Board of Works, in pursuance of Section 14 of The Irish Land Act, 1903. The Commissioners have since communicated to the Board of Works particulars of the following:—

Kilmallock Abbey, county Limerick.
Buolick Church, county Tipperary.
Cross in Carpenterstown, county Cork.
Lixnaw Castle, county Kerry.
Dromineer Castle, county Tiperrary.

Of the total, the Board of Works have been able to accept the vesting of the following as being of sufficient historical, astistic, or traditional interest, namely:—

Drumbo Round Tower, county Down.
Augustinian Abbey, Callan, county Kilkenny.
Ballyboggan Abbey, county Meath.
Kilmallock Abbey, county Limerick.

The respective county councils have consented to the following being vested in them, and the vesting has been completed in the cases marked with an asterisk:—

*Carbery Church, county Kildare.
Ballycowan Castle, King's County.
Srah Castle, King's County.
Heathstown Castle, county Westmeath.
Mahee Castle, county Down.
Round Tower, county Down.
Church, county Down.
Mulrankin Castle, county Wexford.
Castle, county Westmeath.
Carrig Castle, county Tipperary.
*Gortnaclea Castle, Queen's County.
*Cornaveigh Castle, county Cork.
Seahorse Monument, county Waterford.
*Giants Grave, county Tyrone.
Down Macpatrick Castle, county Cork.
Cross, county Westmeath.

Liscannor Harbour Works.

Mr. HALPIN (Clare, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has seen the resolution of the Clare County Council complaining of the unfinished state of the works at Liscannor harbour, the neglect of the contractor in connection with the same, and the consequent dangerous condition of the harbour; and whether he proposes to takes any steps in reference to the matter immediately.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Board of Works inform me that they have received a copy of the resolution referred to in the Question, which was passed by the Clare County Council on 21st October last. The engineer to the Board of Works reported a year ago that the contract for the works had been practically completed by the contractors with the exception of the deepening of the harbour. Since that date some progress has been made with the excavation, and, as I informed the hon. Member on the 12th instant, the Board of Works are now negotiating with a view to taking over the completion of the works themselves. The Board will use their best efforts to get the works completed as soon as possible. In my Answer of the 12th instant I said that the Board were informed that the quarries are closed. The Board now ask me to say that though the quarries were closed for a short time last spring, they are glad to learn from more recent reports that the quarries are still being worked.

Irish Land Purchase.

Mr. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, how long does the Land Commission anticipate it would take it to deal with and complete the sales, to the value of some thirty-four millions of money, in respect of which agreements are already lodged, even if the funds to pay the purchase money were supplied to the Land Commission as rapidly as they could deal with the agreements; and what has been the average yearly amount of purchase money actually paid since the Act of 1903 came into force on 1st November, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commissioners do not think it possible to anticipate the future in the manner proposed in the Question, depending as it does on contingencies which to a large extent they cannot control. The amounts hitherto advanced for all purposes of land purchase other than the Labourers Acts are as follow—

For the twelve months ending—

31st October, 1904	-	£3,659,236
,, ,, 1905	-	£4,691,204
,, ,, 1906	-	£6,013,065
,, ,, 1907	-	£5,376,069
For the period 1st November, 1907 to 13th February, 1908	-	£1,199,532

The average amount of the advances for the four completed years is £4,922,400.

Frivolous Police Prosecutions at Belfast.

Mr. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been drawn to a statement made in the Belfast Summons Court, on 13th February, 1908, in a case in which a countryman was summoned for not driving his cart on the proper side of the road, by Mr. F. C. Johnston, J.P., the presiding magistrate, to the effect that the number of frivolous cases brought up in the last few weeks was ridiculous, and that they knew the police had instructions from headquarters that if they did not do certain things there would be transfers; whether any instructions have been issued to the Belfast police of the nature referred to by Mr. Johnston, or, if not, what is the nature of the instructions, if any, issued to the police in Belfast with regard to securing a certain number of arrests and convictions in any given period of time; whether any policemen have been transferred for non-compliance with such instructions; whether the system referred to obtains elsewhere, and, if so, where; whether frivolous cases like those referred to are included in the criminal records of the country; and whether seeing that such a system is tantamount to putting a premium on the manufacture of petty offences by the police, he will order the immediate withdrawal of any such instructions to the police as those referred to by the magistrate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The police authorities inform me that it is the case that Mr. Johnston, the presiding magistrate, made a statement to the effect mentioned in the Question, but that it is not the case that the Belfast police have brought frivolous prosecutions or that any instructions such as the magistrate mentioned have been issued in Belfast or elsewhere. Prosecutions for breaches of the Belfast City bye-laws have of late been more numerous than formerly. It had been the practice of the police to caution offenders in many cases, particularly those concerning breaches of the traffic regulations. Cautions have been found to be useless, and the Corporation on several occasions requested the Commissioner of Police to enforce the bye-laws more strictly. This is the only foundation for the suggestions contained in the Question. No transfer or threats of transfer have been made, nor any reference to securing a certain number of arrests and convictions in a given period of time. Prosecutions under the bye-laws are included under the head of minor offences in the usual Returns, and the results of such prosecutions are shown.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Matthew Brady.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether Matthew Brady, of Stonefield, Virginia Road, county Meath, has applied to the Estates Commissioners to be reinstated in his former holding; whether they have entered into negotiations with the tenant at present in occupation to give up possession; and with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have decided that Brady is a suitable person to receive a holding, and the case has been referred to an inspector with the object of providing him with a holding. The Commissioners have not had any negotiations with the present occupier of Brady's former holding.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Edward O'Brien.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether Edward O'Brien, an evicted tenant on the estate of Mr. J. H. Nicholson, Balrath, Kells, county Meath, has applied to be reinstated in his former holding; what action has been taken; and whether, having regard to the fact that his former holding now forms part of an area of 5,000 acres given in the Returns prepared by the Commissioners as untenanted land, the Estates Commissioners will exercise the compulsory powers vested in them to restore this evicted tenant to his former holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application of Edward O'Brien and have recorded his name as that of a person suitable to receive a holding. The case has been referred to an inspector with the object of providing O'Brien with a holding. The Commissioners approached Mr. Nicholson with the view of opening negotiations for the purchase of his untenanted lands, but he has declined to proceed.

Transfer of Native Lands to British Central Africa Company.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether under the terms of the Nyasaland concession to the British Central Africa Company, it is proposed to transfer certain lands in the Chiladzulu, Ingludi, and Malabri districts, at present in the occupation of natives, to the British Central Africa Company; whether the native rights to these lands was recognised at the time that the Protectorate was declared; whether the natives themselves have recently sent in a petition that the land in question should not be alienated; and whether, having regard to the circumstances of the case, the Government will see that the land is maintained as a Native Reserve.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Secretary of State has not heard of any concession from the Government to the British Central Africa Company. Apparently the districts mentioned are part of those out of which lands may eventually be granted in certain circumstances to the Shiré Highlands Railway Company. No petition on the subject has at present reached the Colonial Office, but in any case Native rights or interests will be carefully safeguarded, and nothing will be finally settled without a full Report from the Governor.

Reinforcements of British Troops in Persia.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether it is intended to reinforce the Indian troops now at Ahwaz, in Persian territory; whether it is intended to reduce this force; whether the original reinforcement was made with the knowledge and consent of the Persian Government; and, if not, whether there is any precedent for the use and reinforcement of a consular guard in the territory of a friendly Power without its knowledge and consent in order to protect the interests of a private trading company.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey*). The first point in the hon. Member's Question was dealt with in my reply to the Question which he addressed to me on the 3rd instant. As regards the second point, the possibility of reducing the force must depend on the state of the district where it is stationed. As regards the third point, the Persian Government were informed that His Majesty's Government proposed to reinforce the Ahwaz consular guard, and the usual facilities were afforded for the passage of the reinforcements. The step was imperatively necessary for the protection of British persons and property, and was taken on the receipt of alarming reports from His Majesty's Vice-Consul as to the condition of the district, which were confirmed by the accounts sent home to their principals by the local agents of the Oil Concessions Syndicate

Avocation of Lancashire Magistrates.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, if he can state the profession, calling, or occupation of those who were in 1906 and 1907 appointed county magistrates, and of those who were appointed borough magistrates in Lancashire during the same period.

(*Answered by Sir Henry Fowler*): The county magistrates appointed for Lancashire in 1906 and 1907 may be divided into—

Those engaged in no occupation - - - -	30
Professional men - -	23
Newspaper proprietors -	4
Farmers - - - -	3
Those engaged in commerce and trade - - -	87
	147

The borough magistrates so appointed may be similarly divided into—

Those engaged in no occupation - - - -	26
Professional men - -	56
Newspaper proprietors -	5
Those engaged in commerce and trade - - -	215
	302

Temporary Courts at Royal Courts of Justices.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the First Commissioner of Works, if he will state upon what representation or requisition the temporary court in the central hall of the Royal Courts of Justice was erected; how long it was maintained; the number of days it was used as a court for the trial of causes, and by whom; and what has been the cost to the public of constructing, furnishing, and maintaining such court.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt*). The temporary court in the central hall was requisitioned by the Lord Chief Justice, with the consent of the Lord Chancellor, on the 10th December, 1907, for use on the 16th idem. It was maintained for eight weeks, that is until the 10th instant. The court was used by Mr.

Justice Darling for the trial of causes for one day, the 19th December, and for a half-day on the 20th December. The illness of a judge enabled Mr. Justice Darling thereafter to use one of the ordinary courts. The total cost of constructing, furnishing, and maintaining the court has been £27 10s.

Imprisonment of Juveniles.

MR. MALLET (Plymouth): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many persons under 16 but over 14 were sentenced in 1906, either at quarter sessions or at assizes, to imprisonment for any period exceeding six months for offences, exclusive of homicide, not specified in the first column of the First Schedule to The Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1979; and how many youthful offenders over 14, detained in reformatory schools, were convicted and imprisoned in 1906, by courts of summary jurisdiction, either for escaping from the schools or for refusing to conform to the rules.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone*). The Answer to the first part of the Question is three, and the second part, five.

Death from Anthrax at Lavenham.

SIR F. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any inquiry has been, or will be, made by the Home Office into the circumstances attending the death of William Howe, woolcomber, in the employ of Messrs. Roper, of Lavenham, Suffolk, who died on 1st August, 1907, of anthrax, stated to have been caused by sorting horsehair; whether horsehair imported from abroad is disinfected under the regulations; whether horsehair produced in Great Britain has also to be disinfected; whether he is aware that several cases of fatal anthrax have occurred among animals in the immediate neighbourhood since the death of William Howe; and whether he will take steps to secure by regulation or otherwise more effective disinfection of materials, whether of foreign or British origin, and prompt and complete destruction of all matter and refuse from factories or warehouses suspected to be of an infections character.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Full inquiry was made at the time into circumstances of this case. The question of the risk of anthrax to workers in horsehair has been under my consideration, and regulations were made by me last December under Section 79 of the Factory Act—to come into force on 1st April next—which will require all horsehair from China, Siberia, and Russia to be disinfected before undergoing any manipulation other than opening and sorting, and special precautions to be observed in opening and sorting. These are the only kinds of horsehair the risk from which is so great as to call for special regulations. In the case of horsehair of British origin the risk is very slight; of 1,322 animals attacked by anthrax in this country in 1906, 36 only were horses, and under the Anthrax Order of 1899 the carcase of every animal affected or suspected to be affected by anthrax is required to be burned or buried. I am informed by the Board of Agriculture that an outbreak of anthrax occurred in the immediate neighbourhood of the factory in question very shortly after the death of William Howe, affecting three horses; in future, under the new regulations, all dust collected from the opening and sorting screens, where China, Siberian, or Russian hair that has not been disinfected is opened or sorted, will require to be burned.

Exports of Worn-Out Horses.

MR. NIELD: To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his attention has been called to the reply of M. Helleputte in the Belgian Chamber of Deputies that his Department could do nothing to prevent the importation of worn-out horses shipped from England if not diseased, and that it remained for England to put an end to the trade, or at least properly to control one which causes torture to dumb creatures; whether he is aware that many of the English horses shipped to Antwerp are found to be in a terrible condition; and in view of that fact, whether he will introduce legislation to prohibit or control such traffic.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries have not yet seen the statement to which the hon.

Member refers. A copy of it will at once be obtained, and M. Helleputte's observations will be carefully considered. The exportation of horses from this country is controlled by an Order issued by the Board in 1898, a copy of which and of the last annual Report of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, which contains full information on the subject, I shall be happy to send to the hon. Member.

Legislation Regarding Milk.

SIR F. CHANNING: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has considered the statements in the Report of Dr. W. Collingridge, Medical Officer of Health of the City of London, as to the dangerously dirty and infectious character of samples of milk, and as to the increasing percentage of unsatisfactory samples; and whether he can and will take immediate steps, and by administrative orders or by representation to local authorities concerned, to provide some temporary check or remedy to these evils pending the passing of the legislation promised.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have not at present received a copy of the Report referred to. I am, however, aware of its general purport, and I have asked for a copy of the Report itself. The Local Government Board have steadily pressed upon local authorities and especially upon rural district councils the importance of bringing about more cleanly and efficient methods in connection with the supply of milk. This they have done by correspondence, by calling for special Reports from medical officers of health in particular cases, and in many instances by causing inspection of rural districts to be made by their own medical staff, in which attention has been given to this matter. It does not appear to me that any immediate administrative action could with advantage be taken, but I trust that the effect of the Bill, which I hope to introduce, will be to secure more satisfactory control over the milk supply of the country.

Vaccination—Conscientious Objection Forms.

SIR MAURICE LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether forms of declaration of conscientious objection to vaccination were supplied to all registrars in England and Wales on or before 1st September 1907; whether these forms contained instructions to the registrars that they should be handed to persons registering births taking place after the 31st day of August 1907; whether it has come to his notice that a few registrars have not handed these forms to persons registering births during the four months from 1st September 1907 to 31st December 1907; and whether he will say what action he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) Forms were supplied to the registrars in the month of September with a view to their being given to every informant of a birth registered on and after 1st October. The forms applied to births so registered if they occurred on or after the 1st September. I find that the Registrar-General only knows of two cases of the kind mentioned by my hon. friend, in addition to the one referred to in his previous Question. These cases were satisfactorily settled by forms being given to the informants by direction of the Registrar-General. No other cases have come under my notice, and the matter does not seem to call for any action on my part.

Fancy Names for Margarine.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can say whether any fancy or other descriptive name, approved of by the Board of Agriculture, is used with margarine in its sale since the passing of The Butter and Margarine Act, 1907; and, if so, what is the name so used.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board have approved about 1,200 fancy or descriptive names for use in connection with margarine, but they do not know how many are in actual use.

Illegal Sale of Beer at Ipswich.

SIR DANIEL GODDARD (Ipswich): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to a case of selling beer in Ipswich without a licence in November; why the malting company, who, it is stated in evidence, sold the beer in cask to their employees, was not prosecuted on behalf of the Inland Revenue; and what steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of such illegal sale.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) My hon. friend presumably refers to a case in which certain employees of the Ipswich Malting Company were prosecuted by the police for selling beer without licence. The Board of Inland Revenue had no evidence of sale by the company to their employees sufficient to justify the institution of proceedings against the company. They warned them, however, that such sales were illegal, and would entail proceedings for a penalty. I have no doubt that the steps taken by the Board are sufficient, in conjunction with the police proceedings, to prevent the occurrence of such malpractices in future. I may, however, point out that the initiation of proceedings does not necessarily rest with a public authority, it being open to any member of the public who has evidence of such unlicensed trading to prosecute the offender himself, under Section 3 of the Licensing Act, 1872.

Compensation for Damage to Horses of Territorial Yeomanry.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford): To ask the Secretary of State for War if, in view of an order issued to County Associations that any insurance of horses of the Territorial Force is to be made by the County Associations out of the £5 allotted per horse, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Territorial cavalry will be precluded from receiving from Government compensation for loss or damage to horses injured during permanent duty now granted to the Imperial Yeomanry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) No compensation will be paid by the Government in respect of loss or damage to horses used by the Territorial Yeomanry. The grant of £5 for 15 days made to the County Associations (as against £5 for 16 days hitherto paid) will enable the Association to take any steps (such as insurance) necessary to provide against damage or loss to hired horses. In the case of officers or men riding their own horses it is provided that the £5 shall be paid over to the officer or man on the same terms as those on which the Association receives it.

Retired Pay of Quartermasters and Riding-masters.

MR. ROSE (Cambridgeshire, Newmarket): To ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the difference in the amount of retired pay attainable by the two classes of ranker officers; whether he is aware that a brevet-major receives retired pay at the rate of £300 a year on reaching the age of forty-eight years, and a district officer of the Royal Artillery and an officer of the coast battalion of the Royal Engineers £292 a year on reaching the age of fifty-five years, whereas a quartermaster or riding-master only receives £200 a year on reaching fifty-five years of age; and whether he can see his way to adjust these discrepancies by levelling up the retired pay of quartermasters and riding-masters to that of one or other of the more favoured classes of officers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) As it has recently been explained to the House, it has not been found practicable to take any steps towards increasing the retired pay of quartermasters. This decision also applies to riding-masters. The case of the quartermasters and riding-masters, as compared with that of the ordinary combatant substantive or brevet-major, was fully dealt with in the reply to a Question put by the Member for the Stowmarket Division of Suffolk on Monday last. As regards the district officers of Royal Artillery and coast battalion officers of Royal Engineers, it must be pointed out that they retire at the age of fifty-five on £292 if major, and on £210 if captain; that the promotion of such officers is by selection to fill vacancies; and that the technical nature of their work renders their duties more important than those of the quartermasters or riding-masters, who obtain their promotion automatically, the step not being accompanied by any real increase in their duties or responsibilities.

Facilities for Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill.

MR. HOUSTON (Liverpool, West Toxteth): To ask the Prime Minister whether, having regard to the feeling existing in the country as to lawless practices in the Church of England, the Government will give facilities for the further discussion of the Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.*) I am afraid that this course is not possible.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

The Navy Estimates.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty when the Navy Estimates may be expected to be circulated to the Members of the House.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Estimates will be in the hands of Members on Monday the 24th.

The Coldstream Guards.

MR. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards has not yet been relieved by another infantry regiment and brought home and disbanded; and how much longer is this promised relief to the British taxpayer to be delayed.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): It has not yet been found practicable to withdraw this battalion from the British Army of occupation in Egypt. At the present moment therefore I am not in a position to give my hon. friend any definite reply to the latter part of his Question.

MR. LEA: Was not an undertaking given by the Secrerary of State that this battalion should be disbanded as a measure of relief to the overburdened British taxpayer?

MR. BUCHANAN: I have no doubt that my right hon. friend will adhere to any promise he has given.

MR. LEA: Well, he has not given effect to it yet.

Army Attestation.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War who will be the members of the advisory committee of the War Office to whom the new form of attestation for those enlisting in the Territorial Army will be submitted.

MR. BUCHANAN: I am afraid I cannot at present state the names of the members as I have not yet had replies from all the persons whom I have asked to serve on the Advisory Council, but I hope I shall be able to give the names in a few days.

Volunteers Medical Examination.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why, according to the attestation paper to be used for Volunteers now serving who join the Territorial Army, a medical examination is necessary, when the leaflet lately issued by the War Office distinctly stated that in the case of such Volunteers no medical examination would be necessary; whether any orders will be issued on the subject; and, if so, when.

MR. BUCHANAN: Will the noble Lord kindly refer to my reply to the Question put on Monday last by my hon. friend the Member for the Woodstock Division of Oxfordshire, in which I hoped I had made it quite clear that the medical certificate in the attestation form for Volunteers now serving only applied to those who wish to leave the arm in which they are serving and join another arm. As I explained, the attestation form will, before being taken into use, be carefully considered by an Advisory Council, and, if necessary, amended forms will be issued.

The Trial of Dinizulu.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the circumstances under which Mr. Jellicoe has refused to continue the defence of Dinizulu; and whether obstacles were placed in Mr. Jellicoe's way in preparing his defence.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I have not yet received a Report from the Governor upon the retirement of Mr. Jellicoe from the defence of Dinizulu, but the Natal Ministers have asked the Governor to telegraph as follows: "The method of procedure adopted in Dinizulu's case is in strict accordance with law of this Colony; any allegations that may have been made against this Government as to the collection of evidence or of difficulties thrown in the way of the prisoner's obtaining witnesses for his defence are false."

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, before or in the course of his preliminary examination, Dinizulu has ever been informed who he is charged with murdering or inciting to murder, or what are the acts of treason alleged against him; and, if not, what is the law in Natal which allows vague and general charges of murder and treason to be made against a prisoner.

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot at present add anything to the information contained in the Governor's telegram of 7th February, which I read in reply to a Question on 10th February. The Secretary of State is still in communication with the Governor on the subject, and I hope to be able to supply further information shortly. My hon. and learned friend will recollect that Ministers have stated that the method of procedure is in strict accordance with the law of the Colony.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): And although this has being going on since February, cannot the right hon. Gentleman yet state who this chief is charged with murdering?

MR. CHURCHILL: We have asked for the information by telegraph, but have not yet got the answer.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies by what authority or under what law of the Colony of Natal has the preliminary examination of Dinizulu been held in gaol and access been denied to the public; and whether any objection to such a course was taken by his legal adviser, and with what result.

MR. CHURCHILL: The magisterial inquiry was held at the gaol under the authority of a Governor's Proclamation, dated 6th February, 1888. Complaint was made by Mr. Jellicoe in his letter which was recently published in the Press of what he described as a secret inquisition, but the Natal Government state that the method of procedure adopted in Dinizulu's case is in strict accordance with the law of the Colony. I think my hon. and learned friend may rest assured that if there have been defects in procedure they will certainly be brought to light in the course of the defence.

MR. MACKARNESS: Can we see the proclamation?

MR. CHURCHILL said that the trial would not be held in private, but it would take place before the Supreme Court. He would endeavour to see whether he could supply a copy of the proclamation.

MR. MACKARNESS: Has the proclamation the force of law?

MR. CHURCHILL: So I understand, but on a legal question I must ask for notice in order that I may consult the law officers.

Trinidad Immigration Ordinance.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware that, in the year 1905–6, 1,768 indentured immigrants in Trinidad were committed to prison for breaches of the Immigration Ordinance; that 10s. is paid by the police court to the constable who arrests any deserting immigrant; and, if so, can he state the annual amount of such rewards, and whether such is paid by the planters or the Government.

MR. CHURCHILL: It appears from the Trinidad Prisons Reports that the number of indentured immigrants imprisoned in 1905–6 for breaches of the Immigration Ordinance was 1,659; but the number so imprisoned in 1906–7 was 1,758. The Secretary of State s unaware of any arrangement or provision under which the payments indicated by the hon. Member could possibly be made; but if he so wishes, inquiry will be made of the local Government whether there is any foundation for the statement.

Trinidad Government Railways.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the annual income and expenditure on the Trinidad Government Railways, as also the wages, hours, and general conditions of labour of the employees on such railways; and, if not, as to whether he will obtain such particulars.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The receipts of the Trinidad Government Railway in 1906–1907 were £92,814 and the expenditure £63,074. The latter figure does not include charges for interest on loans which amounted to about £23,000, though the actual amount for the year is not before me. I am unable to supply detailed particulars as to wages, hours, and conditions of labour on the railway, but the Governor will be asked for a report if the hon. Member will indicate more precisely the information he desires as to conditions of labour.

Maltese Legislative Council.

Mr. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any reform of the composition of the Legislative Council of Malta is contemplated by His Majesty's Government; and, if so, can he say what direction the reform will take.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Representations regarding the composition of the Legislative Council of Malta are before the Secretary of State, but I regret that I am unable to make any statement on the subject at present.

Mr. CURRAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that prior to 1902 the Council was made up of thirteen elected and eight appointed members, and that in that year its constitution was altered and it was composed of ten appointed and eight elected members.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am well aware of that. I gave the subject my best personal attention when I had the opportunity of visiting Malta.

Martial Law in Natal.

Mr. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there is any precedent for the Government of a Colony, as in the case of the Government of Natal to-day, proclaiming and persisting in maintaining martial law against the advice of the Governor of the Colony.

Mr. CHURCHILL: No, Sir, I do not know of any precedent.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked whether it would be within the competence of the Governor, on advice, to refuse assent to the Indemnity Bill and to give that intimation in quarters where it would be appreciated?

Mr. CHURCHILL said that the Indemnity Bill was first passed by the Natal Parliament, and then it was reserved to receive the assent of the Secretary of State.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: The Governor will not immediately give his assent, but reserve it for the Cabinet?

Mr. CHURCHILL: According to constitutional practice an Indemnity Bill is always reserved.

Proclamation of Martial Law.

Mr. HERBERT: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there have been issued from time to time by the Colonial Office regulations to Governors of Colonies prescribing the conditions under which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, martial law might properly be proclaimed; and whether he would lay those regulations upon the Table of the House.

Mr. CHURCHILL: After the Jamaica rebellion the subject of martial law was very carefully considered, and a circular despatch was sent on 26th January, 1867, to the Governors of all Colonies. This despatch, which deals with the grounds on which martial law should be proclaimed will be found printed in the Parliamentary Paper entitled Correspondence relating to native disturbances in Natal, laid in May, 1906 (Cd. 2905). Papers relating to the administration of martial law in South Africa will be found in the Parliamentary Papers Cd. 981 of 1902 and Cd. 1423 of 1903.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL said that in the case of Governor Eyre it was stated distinctly that the responsibility for proclaiming martial law lay primarily with the Governor of the Colony as the Imperial officer.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) asked whether, as far as was known to the Colonial Office, there was anything relating to disorder or threatened disorder among the population of Natal which justified, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, the continued denial of civil and legal rights to the population, whether white or black.

MR. CHURCHILL: I should not like to choose any words on the spur of the moment to answer that Question.

Baghdad Railway.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any further information which may be made public regarding the progreess, or want of progress, of the Baghdad Railway project.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The first section of the Baghdad Railway, from Konia to Boulgurlu, a little beyond Eregli, was opened to traffic in October, 1904. From recent information it appears that no progress has been or is yet being made with the construction of the next section.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe) was understood to ask if further Papers would be issued.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I think my right hon. friend has already communicated all the information he has to the House by way of Question and Answer.

Employment in Belgium.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the omission of any reference in the last Report of His Majesty's Consul-General in Belgium as to the condition of employment, wages, and the cost of living, and the relation these bear to the trade of the country; whether he is aware that such information on Germany is supplied by His Majesy's Consul at Frankfort; and if he will issue instructions to all Consuls to supply such information in their Reports.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend is aware of the facts stated. For the reasons mentioned in the reply given to the hon. Member on 26th August last, he is doubtful how far general instructions to Consuls with regard to this matter are practicable; but the attention of His Majesty's Consular Officers in some of the more important industrial centres abroad will be directed to the matter.

Budget Suggestions.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, owing to the crowds that now nightly visit places of entertainment all over the country, he will consider the desirability of taxing all entertainment tickets or taxing the capacity of the halls, theatres, and other places that are licensed for public amusement.

I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered the desirability of altering the law as regards a penny stamp upon all receipts and making the stamp according to the amount for which the receipt is given, say, 1d. for every £50 or part thereof.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): Both the suggestions are familiar to me and I assure my hon. friend that, like all suggestions relating to taxation, they will continue to receive my careful consideration.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): Having regard to the precisely similar undertaking which the right hon. Gentleman gave to me in reply to a precisely similar suggestion a week ago, can he say whether in pursuance of that undertaking he has taken any steps or proposes to take any steps, to acquaint himself with the amount of revenues derived by France, Germany, and other enlightened countries from these sources?

MR. ASQUITH: I hope I shall neglect no relevant source of information.

The Licensing Bill.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) asked when the Licensing Bill would be introduced, and whether a guillotine Resolution dealing with the whole progress of the measure would be brought forward?

MR. ASQUITH: I shall make a statement to-morrow as to the course of business next week.

Factory Inspection.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the number of factories and workshop that were not visited by factory inspectors during 1907; and what number have not been visited since 1905.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): During 1907, 28,286 factories and 55,952 workshops were unvisited by factory inspectors, and about 6,500 and 21,000 respectively were unvisited by the district staff either in 1906 or 1907.

Half-Timers in Belfast Mills.

MR. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of boys and girls employed as half-timers in mills and factories in Belfast, their ages, wages, hours, and days of work; whether any, and if so, how many, are employed on three consecutive days of the week; and whether any, and if so, how many, are employed for part of each of the six working days in the week.

MR. GLADSTONE: According to the latest statistics, which are those for 1904, 711 boys and 1,289 girls (2,000 in all), between the ages of twelve and fourteen years, were employed as half-timers in Belfast factories. I have no official information as to the wages of such persons, but I understand they are usually from 3s. to 4s. per week. Practically all are employed from 6.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., with two intervals for meals amounting to one and a half hours (*i.e.*, in addition to the half hour allowed from 6 to 6.30 in the morning), on three alternate days in the week.

Taximeters.

MR. HAY MORGAN (Cornwall, Truro): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the taximeters affixed to motor cabs plying for hire in the Metropolis register different fares for identical distances; and whether any arrangements are made for a periodical test of the accuracy of such taximeters.

MR. GLADSTONE: Different fares will often be registered for identical distances, because the fare chargeable for taximeter cabs is based on a combination of time and distance. Arrangements have been made for the periodical testing of the accuracy of all taximeters.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Have the police instructions to take action where the taximeters are registering wrong prices?

MR. GLADSTONE: When complaints are received they will be inquired into by the police.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Should complaints as to overcharges be made to the Commissioner or to the Home Office?

MR. GLADSTONE: To the Commissioner. If any are sent to the Home Office I will see that they are forwarded to the police.

The Eight Hours Bill.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's) asked whether the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill would be introduced under the ten minutes rule.

MR. GLADSTONE said that he was in the hands of the House. He had suggested introducing the Bill not under the ten minutes rule, because the Bill was before the House last year, and no alteration in its provisions had been made. But if it were desired that he should make a statement, he would do so.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) asked whether it was proposed to submit a closure resolution in respect to the Bill?

MR. GLADSTONE: No, Sir, it is not.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS intimated that he would further communicate with the right hon. Gentleman.

Flogging in Prisons.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in prisons where convicts are sentenced by the visiting justices to be flogged, warders are employed to do the flogging at the rate of 5s. per dozen strokes; whether he has any official information showing that warders often provoke prisoners to sin in order to get the flogging fee; and whether, in the interests of humanity, he will consider the advisability of arranging that trials before visiting justices for prison offences should be open to the public.

MR. GLADSTONE: The payment for carrying out a sentence of corporal punishment in convict prisons is 2s. 6d. to each officer irrespective of the number of strokes. I am certain there is not the slightest ground for the suggestion that prison officers provoke convicts to commit acts of violence or mutiny in order to obtain this small fee. I see no reason for departing from the present arrangement for the adjudication upon serious offences in convict prisons by a Board of independent Visitors, unconnected with the official administration, which was sanctioned after full discussion in Parliament by the Prison Act, 1898.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Is it the case that the payment of warders for that purpose is proportioned by the number of strokes, and will not the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration the desirability of engaging these warders on an entirely different footing?

MR. GLADSTONE: If a better system can be devised I will consider it. The payment is made only to the warder who takes part in the actual punishment.

MR. PIRIE: But is the amount governed by the number of strokes?

MR. GLADSTONE: No, Sir.

British Oak.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can prescribe, as far as may be, the use of home-grown oak for the construction of railway carriages and wagons in the United Kingdom, in view of its greater power of resistance in accidents and general superiority to American and other oak.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The Board of Trade are unable to prescribe the use of any particular kind of timber, and I have no reason to believe that wood of insufficient strength is used in the construction of railway carriages and wagons.

Administration of British Railways.

MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton); I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what will be the reference to the conference which he has recently invited to consider details connected with the administration of British railways; whether he is aware of the urgent necessity of finding means of alleviating the grievances of farmers against railway companies; and what representation he has provided for agriculturists or for Ireland at the conference.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I do not propose to limit by any rigid terms of reference the scope of the inquiry to which my hon. friend refers, but questions affecting agricultural interests will be considered. Agriculture is represented at the conference by Mr. O. D. Johnson and a representative of the Board of Agriculture. I may remind my hon. friend that Irish railways are at present engaging the attention of a Vice-Regal Commission.

British Trade in Canada.

MR. C. E. PRICE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is able to confirm the statement made in the Report of Mr. Richard Grigg, on the condition of British Trade in Canada, that the increase in the cost of food, rent, fuel, and clothing during the ten years ending 1906 has been 44 per cent.; and whether he can state what has been the increase in wages during the same period.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: As stated in Mr. Grigg's Report, the particulars referred to are based on the result of an unofficial investigation under the direction of a distinguished economist. They relate primarily to the city of Toronto. I understand from Mr. Grigg that he took steps to verify the substantial accuracy of these figures. There has apparently been a general increase in wages in Canada during the period referred to, varying for different trades. I am unable, however, to state a general average percentage of increase.

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Swansea.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state what Government grants, including those now due, have been earned by the St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Swansea, since the appointed day in September, 1904; and what amount has actually been expended by the local education authority out of these Government grants on St. Joseph's School.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The grants paid to the local education authority for Swansea in respect of children attending the St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School since the Appointed Day amount to £4,024 1s. 0d. Some of the grants in respect of the year ending 31st December, 1907, are still outstanding, but as the form of claim has has not yet been received the amount cannot be stated. The grants paid are not ear-marked as sums to be spent on the particular schools in respect of which they are paid and the expenditure upon each individual school is not separated in the accounts of most local authorities. I have no information, therefore, as to the sums actually expended by the local authority on St. Joseph's School.

MR. BOLAND: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether a single penny of this money has been actually expended?

MR. McKENNA: It must have been or the school could not have been maintained all. Still I have no information as to the actual expenditure.

MR. BOLAND: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state what extra expense, if any, has been incurred by the Swansea Education Authority in consequence of its having taken over the management of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School.

MR. McKENNA: I am not sure what meaning the hon. Member attaches to the expression "having taken over the management of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School," but if he refers only to the obligation of maintenance under the Act of 1902, I must refer him to my Answer to his previous Question.

Garforth Church School.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether on 11th April last, the West Riding Education Committee suggested to the Board that the Garforth Church School should be confined to junior and infant children; whether on 2nd June the Board wrote stating that they could see no adequate reason for such reorganisation; whether on 20th June the Board reiterated their decision; whether on 10th July the Board reversed this decision;

and, if so, what fresh material came before the notice of the Board to cause them so to reverse their decision.

MR. MCKENNA: The Answer to the first four Questions is in the affirmative. With regard to the fifth, consideration was not given in the earlier decision of 3rd June to the fact that the size of the premises necessitated that a certain number of children must, in any case, be excluded and that the school organisation of the district would be facilitated if the higher classes were transferred. On my attention being drawn to this aspect of the case I had no hesitation in giving the decision of 12th July.

Foot and Mouth Disease in Scotland.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, with reference to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland, he has now satisfied himself that the disease was imported in foreign hay; and, if so, whether it is proposed to take any steps to restrict such importation.

*MR. J. H. LEWIS (Flintshire): My hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question, and to say that he is unable at present to add anything to the reply which he gave to a similar Question on the 17th instant.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Having regard to the fact that the hay from Rotterdam caused this outbreak and that the disease is prevalent all over the Netherlands, will the Board prevent hay coming into this country from that source.

*MR. J. H. LEWIS: This Question is receiving very careful consideration, but no decision has yet been arrived at. The inquiry is being made.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: What inquiries are necessary? We know the hay caused the outbreak and you can prevent its importation.

*MR. J. H. LEWIS: It must be obvious to the hon. Member that in a matter of this kind careful inquiries are absolutely necessary.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): But it is a well-known fact that foot-and-mouth disease is prevalent in the Netherlands, and does not the hon. Gentleman think it is the duty of the Government to stop the importation of hay from there?

*MR. J. H. LEWIS: I can assure the House that the Board are giving the most careful attention to the matter, and that whatever action they deem reasonable will be taken as soon as possible.

MR. STANLEY WILSON: Is this foreign hay supplied to Army horses in Scotland?

AN HON. MEMBER: There are none.

Barra.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state when the correspondence with Lady Gordon Cathcart regarding Barra will be in the hands of Members.

*SIR J. DEWAR (Inverness) asked if in addition to the correspondence already promised such additional documents as were necessary to enable hon. Members to understand the points at issue would be laid on the Table.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): Proof copies have been received, and I am preparing full Papers to lay upon the Table. In reply to the hon. Member for Inverness I will consider what can be done.

Wood Quay Wall, Galway.

MR. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Board of Works are responsible for the maintenance of the river wall at Wood Quay, in Galway City; how many lives have been lost by drowning at this place within the past ten years; and whether the Board of Works, if responsible for the maintenance, will provide a railing to prevent further accidents.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am informed by the Board of Works that the responsibility for the maintenance of the river wall in question rests upon the Trustees incorporated under the Act 19 and 20 Vict., cap. 62, in whom the Lough Corrib Navigation is vested. The Board of Works have no information as to loss of life by drowning at this place.

MR. GWYNN: Have the Board of Works any control over the trustees?

MR. CHERRY: It would be better if the hon. Member would address the Question to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Limerick Evicted Tenants.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state the number of applications for reinstatement that have been received by the Estates Commissioners from evicted tenants in the county of Limerick or their representatives; whether they have sanctioned all of them, and in how many cases has reinstatement taken place; how many have been provided with equivalent holdings; and if he can say in how many of these cases has the settlement been brought about by the Estates Commissioners, and what steps they are taking to deal with the remainder.

MR. CHERRY: I would refer to my Answer to similar Questions yesterday and the day before. The Estates Commissioners are preparing for presentation to Parliament a complete Return which will show all cases of restoration of evicted tenants, and in the meantime it is not proposed to prepare partial returns relating to particular districts. It is expected that the Return will be ready about the middle of next month.

Doongeelagh Estate, Killadoon.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Estates Commissioners, in June last, received a memorial from the tenantry of the Doongeelagh Estate, situate in Killadoon, county Sligo, Boyle (No. 2) District Council, praying them to communicate with the owners with a view to purchase; have they taken any steps in the matter since; and if so, with what result.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners are unable to identify the matter in question from the particulars given. If the hon. Member will furnish the name and address of the owner of the estate, the Commissioners will be prepared to answer the Question.

King-Harman Estate, Longford.

MR. J. PHILLIPS (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have received applications from two evicted tenants, named John Farrell and John Heslin, on the King-Harman estate, Lisnanagh, county Longford, to be restored to their holdings on this townland; and, if so, what is the cause of delay, as the farms were completely derelict during the past year; and when will they be reinstated.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have received applications from the evicted tenants mentioned in the Question. The estate is the subject of proceedings in the Chancery Division of the High Court, and the Commissioners have not been able so far to effect the reinstatement of the evicted tenants. The matter will be further considered.

Viscount Southwell's Estate.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say when the Estates Commissioners will give a grant to James Dore, of Curraghnadeely, Rathkeale, evicted tenant on the estate of Viscount Southwell, to enable him to stock the land and repair the dwelling house; and whether he is aware that Dore was put into possession under an agreement as eleven months grazier, and finds it difficult without a grant to work the land and pay the rent, as he has no capital.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners duly inquired into the application for reinstatement lodged by James Dore, and communicated to the owner the price which they are prepared to advance for the purchase of the holding. The owner, however, declined to accept that price, and the Commissioners are not prepared to increase it. It is understood that Dore is temporarily in possession of the holding under a grazing letting, but until an agreement for purchase has been arrived at, the Commissioners cannot consider the question of giving him a grant.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners, before completing the sale of the estate of Lord Southwell to his tenants, will include in it the case of Mrs. Mary O'Regan, of Castlematrix, Rathkeale, who is sub-tenant to the middle landlords, the representatives of Julius Delmege, deceased, of about nine acres, held at the yearly rent of £25.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have directed the special attention of their inspector to the alleged sub-tenancy referred to in the Question. When the estate is being inspected the matter will be fully inquired into, and the Commissioners will then be in a position to deal with it.

Ennistymon Fair.

MR. HALPIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the inhabitants of Ennistymon and district decided at a meeting to establish a new fair on the 22nd and 23rd of January, the landlord, who is the patentee, consenting; will he inquire why the sergeant of police told the traders of the town to take off their window posters announcing a new fair; on what authority and on whose instruction the sergeant acted; will he also say on what authority extra police were brought into Ennistymon from Lahinch, Liscannor, and Kilfenora, and posted at all the roads approaching the town on the morning of the 22nd January to prevent people entering with their cattle; whether the police took a note of the names of those who entered the town with cattle; and, if so, how many names were taken down; why were they not prosecuted as threatened by the police; and what was the expense of bringing those extra police into Ennistymon.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that certain shopkeepers of Ennistymon arranged to hold a fair on 22nd and 23rd January in addition to the established fairs, and advertised the fact accordingly. The patentee of the existing fairs and his lessee objected, and inserted notices in the local newspapers that no fair would be held on the dates named. Mr. Macnamara, the patentee, further informed the police that he would place men on the fair green and allow no cattle to be brought there on those days. The local police sergeant mentioned this fact to the shopkeepers, and as some of them were not disposed to persist in holding the fair against the patentee's wishes, the sergeant suggested that, in the interests of peace, they should remove from their windows the notices announcing the new fair. It is usual to send six policemen from neighbouring stations to Ennistymon fair to assist in preserving the peace. This number was brought in by the police authorities on 22nd January. No extra expense was incurred. The police did not interfere with people who brought in cattle. Only a few cattle were brought into the village, and no attempt was made to put them on the fair green. The police took the names of two persons who were causing an obstruction of the street with their cattle, but as they moved the cattle away on being spoken to they were not prosecuted.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it true that the police caused the posters to be removed from the shop windows? Had they any legal right to take that action?

MR. CHERRY: I understand that they did not. They merely suggested to the shopkeepers that it would be better, but they did not enforce it in any way. In fact, they had no legal right whatever to do so.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it not desirable that the police should refrain from making suggestions in regard to matters as to which they have no legal right to act?

MR. CHERRY: I think suggestions coming from the police in the interests of the peace are very valuable, and constitute a very desirable way of preserving the peace of Ireland.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I may say I never take a suggestion from any policeman.

Mr. Beamish's Gortrae Estate.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the general nature of the communications which have passed between Mr. H. G. A. Beamish and the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of the estate of the former at Gortrae, county Cork; is he aware that the agents for this estate, Messrs. Hussey and Townsend, wrote at one time offering to leave the settlement of the dispute with the tenants to the arbitration of the Estates Commissioners; were the lands inspected by Mr. Gerald McElligott, one of their inspectors, in May last; can he disclose the nature of the Report made by that gentleman, and whether there is any immediate hope of a sale to the tenants; and whether any lands have been evicted on this estate, and the present position of the evicted tenants.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners presume that this Question is intended to refer to the property of Mr. H. G. A. Beamish at Gortrae. This property has been offered for sale to the Commissioners, who have had it inspected and have made a formal offer for purchase. The question of price is now the subject of negotiation between them and the owner. The Commissioners cannot make any arrangements for the re-sale of the lands until the purchase has been agreed upon. It would be contrary to the Commissioners' practice to state details of the negotiations, or the purport of their inspector's report in such cases. There are two evicted holdings on the estate and the cases of evicted tenants will be dealt with if the Commissioners should acquire the property. The Commissioners have no knowledge of any dispute between the landlord and tenants in this case, or of any communications such as are alleged to have been made by the agents.

Revolver Firing on Licensed Premises.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that Mr. Frank Persse, J.P., fired several revolver shots on licensed premises in the town of Loughrea, about 12 o'clock noon, in December last, smashing into pieces the public clock on the premises; whether this is the same Mr. Persse who, at petty sessions lately held in Loughrea, was summoned by a tenant, John Healy, for violently assaulting him in the rent office; was he fined on the occasion; and do the Government propose to take steps to prevent this gentleman from carrying firearms.

MR. CHERRY: The matter referred to in the Question was not reported to the local police. They have, however, been informed that at about 3 p.m. on some date between 30th November and 5th December, Mr. Frank Persse, J.P., was drinking with another man in Mrs. Larkin's public-house at Loughrea, and the subject of good shooting came under discussion. By way of demonstrating his good marksmanship, Mr. Persse is alleged to have fired one revolver shot at a clock which hung in the bar. The shot missed the clock, but hit the wall, knocking some mortar off it. It is stated that very few people were in the shop at the time, and Mrs. Larkin, the publican, can only say that she heard a shot fired. The Government have no power to prevent Mr. Persse from carrying firearms. Mr. Persse is the same person who was recently fined 10s. for assaulting John Healy in the rent office.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether this Mr. Frank Persse, who has been convicted of assault, and who fired the shot in the public-house, is still a magistrate, and whether he is a brother of the Mr. Persse who is at present entertaining drawing-room companies in London with tales about alleged violence committed by Irish people?

MR. CHERRY: Mr. Persse is a magistrate. I believe he is some relation of the other gentleman, but I am not aware of the exact relationship.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman ascertain the exact relationship of Mr. Persse to the gentleman who addressed a great mass meeting in the Duchess of St. Alban's drawing-room?

[No Answer was returned.]

Lord Gough and his Tenantry.

MR. DUFFY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state how far the Estates Commissioners were successful in negotiating terms of purchase between Lord Gough, owner of the property in the Gort and Kilbecanty districts, county Galway, and the tenants; whether Mr. Frank Persse, J.P., agent of the property, while negotiations were pending, passed through the district of Kilbecanty on the evening of the 22nd January last, and fired several rifle shots, to the fear and terror of the people; and, if so, is it the intention of the authorities to prosecute in this matter.

MR. CHERRY: In reply to the first part of the Question, I can only repeat my right hon. friend's reply to a similar Question put by the hon. Member on 9th May last, namely, "The Estates Commissioners have had several interviews with Lord Gough and the tenants' representative, and as a result the landlord agreed to sell the tenanted holdings at such prices as the Commissioners should consider reasonable, and also to sell such untenanted lands as the Commissioners should think necessary at the Commissioners' price. Lord Gough, however, made it a condition that the sporting rights should be reserved to him as he intended to reside at Lough Cutra, and upon the tenants demurring to this he offered to agree that if the tenants' crops should be damaged by game, he would pay such compensation as the Land Commission might consider proper. Lord Gough's offer appeared to the Commissioners to be reasonable, but the tenants refused to accept it, and the negotiations, therefore, came to an end. The Commissioners do not see that they can take any further action in the matter." As regards the remainder of the Question, Mr. Frank Persse was summoned by the police for discharging firearms on or near the public road, and the case was adjourned from the 6th instant until to-morrow, when it will be heard.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Will the Government bring the conduct of this gentleman under the notice of the Lord Chancellor?

MR. CHERRY: I should like to know the result of the proceedings to-morrow first.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: But the right hon. Gentleman knows well the result of the proceedings at the police court when he was fined 10s.

Lord Gough's Untenanted Lands.

MR. DUFFY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been directed to the action of Mr. Frank Persse, J.P., Gort, in recently planting a number of young trees on untenanted lands belonging to Lord Gough; whether these lands were offered some months ago to the Commissioners by Lord Gough to distribute amongst the congested tenants on his estate in the district; and having regard to the disturbed state of the district and the provocative conduct of the agent, do the Commissioners propose to make any representation to Lord Gough in reference to the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have no knowledge of the planting referred to in the Question, but my right hon. friend has been informed by Lord Gough that the trees which he has planted are on that portion of his home property which the Commissioners decided should be retained by him, and that he has not planted any portion of the untenanted lands which the Commissioners proposed should be sold to his tenants. The remainder of the Question is dealt with in my Answer to the last Question.

Forthill Burial Ground, Galway.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the medical officer of health in Galway, at the instance of the Local Government Board, made a report with reference to the condition of the Forthill burial ground, Galway, and as to whether further burials should be prohibited therein; what did that report recommend and what steps, if any, have been taken to carry out the said recommendations.

MR. CHERRY: Yes, Sir; and the medical officer of health reported that in his opinion there was not sufficient space for opening new graves. The Urban District Council, however, informed the Local Government Board that no new graves have been opened in this graveyard for some years past and that interments are limited to the case of persons whose grave spaces and vaults have been reserved owing to their having possessed rights of interment therein. In these circumstances, the Local Government Board have taken no further action in the matter.

Waterford Guardians and their Engineer.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that, at a meeting of the Waterford Board of Guardians held on 13th December last, the chairman proposed that, in consequence of Mr. Scully, who had been employed for many years as consulting engineer to the Board, having given evidence as to the amount of the damage done to Lord Ashtown's house at Glenaheiry by the bomb explosion, they should dispense with his services and employ another engineer; whether this course was agreed to by the Board with two dissentients; and what steps the Local Government Board took or intend to take in the matter.

Mr. CHERRY: The Local Government Board are informed by the Clerk of the Waterford Union that in the discussion on 13th of November the Chairman may have suggested that Mr. Scully's services should be dispensed with, but the only motion on the subject put to the Board of Guardians was that Mr. Scully should be asked to send in his account for the amount then due to him, which motion was passed by eight votes to two. The Clerk adds that Mr. Scully is still in the guardians' service. The Local Government Board have taken no action in the matter, which appears to be one within the discretion of the guardians.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: Is it not the fact that Mr. Scully is in the employment of the guardians only in respect of work which was current at the time of the proceedings, and that he has not been put on any new work?

Mr. CHERRY: I really do not know. The answer of the clerk is that Mr. Scully is still in the service of the guardians.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman endeavour to find out whether the facts as to employment are not as I have stated.

Mr. CHERRY: The hon. Member had better put his Question down.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): Has the right hon. Gentleman read the letter from Mr. Scully in *The Times* to-day in which he entirely corroborates the statement that he has been discharged?

Mr. CHERRY: No, Sir.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will get it and read it.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: He has not the time to do it.

Belturbet Council Election.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Local Government Board has received a complaint from James Breisland, of Belturbet, of irregularities in the election of urban councillors for that town, which took place on 15th January; whether one complaint was that the returning officer, who is also the town clerk of Belturbet, when he found that the number of votes for Mr. Breisland and another candidate were equal, gave a casting vote against Mr. Breisland; whether the proper course is for the returning officer to decide by lot between the two persons with an equal number of votes; whether the returning officer permitted Robert Bradley to vote in the said election, although his name was not on the register; and what steps will the Local Government Board take in the matter.

Mr. CHERRY: The Local Government Board have received a complaint from Mr. Breisland to the effect stated in the first two parts of the Question. In the case of an equality of votes for candidates the prescribed course is for the returning officer to decide by lot between the candidates. The Local Government Board have no information as to Mr. Bradley's vote. The Board have no jurisdiction in the matter. An election petition would appear to be the remedy in such cases.

Maintenance of Discharged Prisoners at Armagh.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the fact that Armagh Gaol, being the prison for the counties of Monaghan, Cavan, Tyrone, as well as Armagh, insane prisoners from all those counties, on expiration of their sentences, become chargeable to the county of Armagh; and whether he will take steps to amend the law which imposes hardships upon the ratepayers of county Armagh.

MR. CHERRY: The fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. Under the Act, 1 and 2 Vic. cap. 27, persons who become insane while in prison are removed to the lunatic asylum of the district in which the prison is situate, and there is no power to transfer such persons on the expiration of their sentence to the asylums of the districts from which they come. It is understood that there are in all the district asylums in Ireland patients who belong primarily to other districts, and matters are therefore substantially equalised. Legislation on the subject would involve the introduction into Ireland of a law of settlement, and the Government do not at present contemplate such legislation.

Lord Southwell's Estate.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have yet considered the case of James Fitzgerald, of Ballingrane, in county Limerick, tenant to the middle landlord, Michael Ruttle, of a house and a half-acre of land on the estate of Lord Southwell, at the yearly rent of £4 10s. for inclusion in the sale of the estate; and whether, having regard to the fact that James Fitzgerald is a solvent tenant and has a small farm besides, they will give him the right to purchase his house and plot for one of his sons on the same terms as the tenants.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have directed their surveyor and inspector, when visiting the estate in question, to inquire into and report upon the alleged sub-tenancy of James Fitzgerald in the holding of Michael Ruttle, a purchasing tenant. When the report has been received the Commissioners will be in a position to rule upon the case.

Belfast Linen Industry.

MR. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he could state the quantity and the value of the linen goods exported from Belfast for each of the ten years ending 31st December, 1898–1907, inclusive; the maximum quantity and value of the linen goods exported from Belfast in any one year; the minimum quantity and value of linen goods exported from Belfast in any one year; the average number of men women, and children employed in mills and factories connected with the linen trade in Belfast during the period 1898–1907, inclusive; the average wages earned by them, and the number of hours worked by them per day, respectively; the number of men, women, and children employed during the months of December, 1907, and January, 1908, the hours worked by them per day, and the average wages earned by them, respectively; and the total quantity and value of linen goods exported from Belfast during December, 1907, and January, 1908.

MR. CHERRY: It is assumed that by goods exported the hon. Member means goods actually shipped from Belfast, including trans-channel shipments. I am informed by the Department of Agriculture that the quantity and value of linen goods so shipped from Belfast were: In 1904, 951,760 cwts., £7,138,200; in 1905, 998,500 cwts., £7,488,750; and in 1906, 1,089,880 cwts., £8,991,550. Prior to 1904 the Department did not collect such statistics, and the figures for 1907 are not yet available. For information upon the remaining points of the Question the hon. Member should address my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade.

Corboy Postboy's Wages.

MR. J. PHILLIPS: To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that William Dowler, a postboy carrying letters from Corboy post office to meet the post running from Ballinalee to Edgeworthstown at Moat Farrell cross roads, county Longford, Ireland, a distance of three miles, and having to make two journeys daily, waits for the mails at the cross roads without any shelter, and working seven days a week, receives only the sum of 5s. 10d. weekly; and will he order an increase in Dowler's pay.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The post office messenger referred to is paid the wages stated for a duty occupying 2½ hours daily. These wages are fixed at the authorised rates, and I should not be justified in increasing them as there is no case for exceptional treatment. The messenger is timed to reach the cross roads only five minutes before the mails arrive there.

POLITICS IN THE COUNTY COURT.

SIR ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest), rising to a point of order, said that he handed in at the Table on Tuesday a Question which was ruled out of order. The Question had reference to the improper conduct of County Court Judge Gye at Basingstoke, who inquired of a plaintiff whether he had voted at the last election, and said he was foolish in having voted for the present Government. The Question having been ruled out of order, he (Sir Robert Hobart) asked for the Speaker's guidance as to how the matter could be brought before the House or otherwise dealt with.

*MR. SPEAKER: The reason why the Question was ruled out of order was because there was no Government Department responsible for County Court Judges, or any Judges. The Judicature of this country is separate from the Executive, and the proper course for the hon. Member to take, as at present advised, I should say, is to write a letter to the Lord Chancellor.

SIR ROBERT HOBART: I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker, and will act upon your suggestion.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Are not English County Court Judges appointed by the Lord Chancellor? Do they not hold office "during pleasure," and are they not dismissable by him? They have no tenure like ordinary Judges in England, or like Irish County Court Judges. They are in almost the same position as magistrates.

*MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. Member making a speech or asking a Question?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: No, Sir, I am not presuming to make a speech. I am asking a Question with the greatest deference. My position is this——

*MR. SPEAKER: I understand the view of the hon. Member is that the Lord Chancellor can dismiss a County Court Judge for an improper action. That is why I suggested to the hon. Member for the New Forest Division that he should write in the first instance to the Lord Chancellor.

HOME WORK.

Ordered, That the Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Home Work in the last Session of Parliament be referred to the Select Committee on Home Work.—*Sir Thomas Whittaker.*

NEW BILLS.

PROHIBITION OF MEDICAL PRACTICE BY COMPANIES BILL.

To prohibit Joint Stock Companies from acting as physicians, surgeons, or medical practitioners. Presented by Sir John Tuke; supported by Sir Philip Magnus, Mr Charles Price, Mr. Gulland, and Sir William Collins, to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 3rd March, and to be printed. [Bill 94.]

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT (1875) AMENDMENT (WATER RIGHTS) BILL.

To empower local authorities to acquire Water Rights otherwise than by agreement. Presented by Mr. Leif Jones; supported by Mr. Brace, Mr. Helme, Viscount Helmsley, by Mr. McCrae, Mr. Nicholls, Mr. Charles Roberts, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Soares, and Mr. Luke White; to be read a second time upon Monday, 2nd March, and to be printed. [Bill 95]

BUILDING LANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

To deal with Building and other Lands in Scotland. Presented by Mr. Munro Ferguson; supported by Mr. Lamont; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 96.]

RIGHTS OF WAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

To amend the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, with regard to Rights of Way. Presented by Mr. Munro Ferguson; supported by Sir Thomas Glen-Coats; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 97.]

NURSES' REGISTRATION (No. 2) BILL.

To regulate the qualifications of trained Nurses, and to provide for their Registration. Presented by Mr. Munro Ferguson; supported by Sir John Dickson-Poynder, Sir John Kennaway, Sir George Robertson, Mr. Rose, Mr. Rainy, Mr. Fell, Mr. Crooks, Dr. Rutherford, Mr. Jowett, and Mr. McKillop; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 98.]

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

To promote Agricultural Education and Nature Study in Public Elementary Schools. Presented by Mr. Jesse Collings; supported by Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Rothschild, Sir Francis Lowe, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Carlisle, and Mr. Butcher; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 99.]

PURCHASE OF LAND (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

To provide facilities for the sale of Land to occupying tenants, and to extend the system of peasant proprietary in England and Wales. Presented by Mr. Jesse Collings; supported by Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Colonel Lockwood, Mr. Courthope, Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Mr. Gardner, Earl Winterton, Mr. Staveley-Hill, and Mr Pike Pease; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 100.]

SMALL HOLDINGS.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said he wished to ask the leave of the House to introduce a Bill to amend the Small Holdings Act of 1892. They had heard a great deal of that Act recently, and it had been said to be limited in its operation, but his experience was that where it has been put into operation it had been an unqualified success. In the county of Worcester a colony of thirty-two peasant proprietors was formed, and they had been there for fourteen years and were in a prosperous condition. It was amusing to hear agents and others outside laying down what must be the conditions necessary for successful farming. They said that small holdings to succeed must be the best land, near a town, that the men must themselves be possessed not only of every agricultural qualification, but of almost every virtue. This colony of small holders, however, did not fulfil all those conditions. The land fifteen years ago was poor, most of it very poor, but it was now rich and productive. It was not near a town, but was sixteen miles off a large town, and the price paid was not low, for it amounted to £40 an acre, and the conditions of repayment were based on 4 per cent., in addition to which there was the usual sinking fund. Those men had for years been producing thousands of pounds worth of produce out of the land, which, before they took it in hand, did not maintain one farmer and a couple of penniless labourers. Now they were producing thousands of pounds worth of those fifty millions worth of the smaller articles of food which we got from abroad, and the money was spent at home instead of abroad. Members would be astonished to see the improvement. Each man kept a horse and cart, and sometimes two horses and two carts, and they provided employment for tradesmen, wheelwrights, shoeing-smiths and blacksmiths, all tending to the prosperity of the neighbourhood, by money raised out of mother earth instead of sending across the channel. They there found the problem of housing solved and the want of employment problem solved, without its costing a penny to the community. The county council had not lost a penny, and as far as he could examine their accounts, when the payments were finished they would be a little in pocket, so that the cost to the community was nothing in any shape or form. There was room in this country for thousands of such holdings that might be employed for the good of the State and the community, and it might be asked why were they not established. The answer was to be found in the undoubted indifference of many county councils some of the members of which, in spite of their talk about small ownerships, had no burning desire to see them created. He would ask the attention of the House to this, that the Act of 1892, required labourers to pay down 20 per cent. of the purchase money at the time of the purchase. They could not do it. They all knew that. The Worcester County Council had, however, got round that requirement in an admirable manner. In one or two cases of which he knew, they had postponed the transfer of the land until the annual instalments should be equal to 20 per cent. of the purchase money, and then they transferred the land. The object of the Bill was to remove that bar of poverty. The Bill was very simple, practically one clause, which gave county councils power to reduce that 20 per cent. to any sum they thought fit, and in cases where they had a suitable man, a man who was of good character and was a good cultivator, but who had no money, they were allowed to do away with the initial payment, and to allow the whole of the money to be repaid by annual instalments. He had just outlined the Bill. Not having been fortunate in the ballot, he could not bring it before the House, but it was so urgent and so important, in his opinion, that it justified him in occupying a few minutes of the House on the question, and therefore he would venture to bring it forward after eleven o'clock, if leave were given to introduce it. He could not see any reason why the Government should object to removing that bar of poverty from industrious, worthy men, in order that they might avail themselves of the advantages of the Act. He was aware of the Act of last year, but that did not interfere with it, for this Bill ran on parallel lines, and gave the option of becoming owners to worthy men. It was less expensive; there were no Commissioners, no anything, and it did not cost the community a penny, while the social good to the community could not be over-estimated. He knew that colony in Worcester; it was a poverty-stricken district fifteen years ago, but now, he was credibly informed, there was not, and had not been for years, an able-bodied pauper in the parish. He begged to ask leave to introduce the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend The Small Holdings Act, 1892."—(*Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

MR. WINFREY (Norfolk, S.W.) said he objected to the introduction of the Bill as a matter of urgency. Considering the Act of Parliament placed upon the Statute Book last year, the House might well wait and see what were the effects of that Act before entertaining any further legislation with respect to the Small Holdings question. He specially objected to this Bill because the peasant proprietory clauses of the Act of 1892, had evidently been a very great failure. That Act had been on the Statute Book for fifteen years, and during the whole of that time only one county council had put the peasant proprietory clauses into operation. There were several county councils that had put the tenantry clauses into operation, and with very great success, and there was a general feeling on that side of the House that it was far better to create tenancies and place men on the soil with fixity of tenure, so that they might have the whole of their small capital to farm with, than to invest any of it in the soil itself. Since the Act of Parliament of last year, they had pretty good evidence that the House of Commons was right in that opinion, because, of the whole of the applications that had come in from England and Wales, asking for something like 100,000 acres of land, not 1 per cent. desired to become peasant proprietors. 99 per cent. of the applicants were desirous of becoming tenants under the public authority, in order that they might have the whole of their small capital to farm with, rather than invest it in the land, and under those circumstances the right hon. Gentleman was ill-advised to move his Bill as a matter of urgency. He thought the House should wait and see the effect of the Act of last year before placing any further legislation on this subject upon the Statute Book.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jesse Collings, Colonel Long, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Bridgeman, Mr. Lane-Fox, Mr. William Nicholson, Mr. Arthur Stanley, Mr. Ellis Davies, and Mr. Mildmay.

SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.

"To amend the Small Holdings Act, 1892," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 101.]

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE LORD-ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I shall endeavour to do so, without abating in any respect my support of the measure, in as brief terms as possible, because the progress of this Bill during the past year has in one respect been singularly fortunate. It is identical with the Bill of last year, which passed its Second Reading by a majority of 218 votes. It was before the Grand Committee for four days, and I ask, in the judgment of my hon. friends on both sides, whether the provisions of the Bill were not thoroughly thrashed out. I do not think I had ever the inclination to move that the closure should be adopted. Then when it returned to this House I confess that we had only one day—I should say a day and a night, because what happened was that we commenced about this hour of the afternoon and talked round the clock, but still during that round of the clock I think only once was the closure moved. Also I may recall to the minds of those who did us the honour of hearing that debate that there were concessions made from point to point, and even up to the small hours of the morning I think both sides were in that spirit. Accordingly the Bill is now presented to the House, not as it was originally introduced at the beginning of last session, but as it left the House. In these circumstances I need not delay the House very long with reference to the provisions of the Bill. May I indicate one or two points only? The first point is why this should be a Scottish Bill to begin with. A good deal, as the House knows, has been made of the contrast between Scottish and English procedure in reference to the land question. There is a very ample and good answer. In the first place, it is well that it should be in Scotland for this reason, and I need have no hesitation in avowing it, that we are at least more than half a century in advance of England on the subject of valuation. In the Valuation Act of 1854 we established a mechanism by which there should be an annual valuation of all land in Scotland. This became a national statistic of great value. So valuable has it been that in addition to the columns originally proposed in the Act of 1854 advantage has been taken of succeeding statutes to add to the columns. For instance, an addition was made under the County Voters Act of 1861, and under the Representation of the People Act there is actually entered to this day a column year by year of those persons entitled to vote under the service franchise. Accordingly we find that not only has it for valuation purposes been so long adopted in Scotland, but it has been found so elastic as to suit other purposes, and the proposal of this Bill fits in with that scheme, and what we wish to do is to take advantage of the forwardness, in point of mechanism on this head, of Scotland, and by the simple addition of a column to the existing valuation roll the House and the country from year to year will be advised as to the capital unimproved value of land, and will be able, so different is it from the English system, to note the additions to or deductions from capital value according as there is a rise or fall in the market value of land in Scotland. I think I have made my first point quite clear, with reference to the machinery to be employed. If you are beginning at the beginning you should certainly begin at a good beginning such as we have set up for fifty years in Scotland. On the principle of the Bill I am not going to detain the House, because I cited last year over and over again from the Reports of the Housing Commissioners, from the Minority Report of the Local Taxation Commission, and from document after document, all the arguments with reference to separate valuation of site and of structure, and I only say that with regard to valuation, I still am at a loss, notwithstanding all the discussions that have ensued, to know what is the objection to having at least a valuation. This Bill is valuation and nothing more. What is the objection to having that valuation? The only persons who propound an answer to that question are persons who in their first breath go into the subject of purchase and of rating after the valuation is set up. With regard to valuation, the Local Taxation Minority Report says that site and structure, which are now combined for rating purposes, differ so essentially in character that they ought to be separately valued. With regard to the feasibility of valuation, I will take leave to cite a recent utterance of Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

> "Personally," he said, "I am inclined to think it is possible, feasible, and even desirable to have a separation of the valuation between the site and the structure in urban districts."

It is fair to say that Lord Balfour of Burleigh throughout has confined his attention on this head to urban districts. It is also fair to add, however, that when he and his colleagues come to speak of urban districts in the Report, they speak of them in a loose sense, that is to say in a sense inclusive of what is urban property, although not within the ambit of an urban area. That I think I could establish if it were necessary, and, if in the discussion it is necessary, it will be established. Lord Balfour of Burleigh also says it can be done without any great cost. Accordingly the position is that if this Bill be confined, as it absolutely is, to valuation alone, we have its feasibility in principle declared, on the very highest authority; and with reference to rating, which may come into the discussion, we still retain the view that this is the first step towards a solution, not only of the rating question, but of housing and other social questions, and also of the question of the transfer of land at capital value to public authorities. The advantage of having this valuation the Report declared to be this—

> "That it would do something towards lightening the burdens in respect of building, and thus something towards solving the difficult and urgent housing problem."

I feel very strongly with regard to the housing problem on this head, because that Report is so clear as to this that it actually denounces the present system of rating. It says—

> "The tendency of our present rates must be generally to discourage building, to make houses fewer, worse and dearer."

I think that was a very grave statement made on very high authority, and if I wanted a warrant for the introduction of this Bill, if it be the first step towards anything like a more equitable system of rating, it is warranted by that testimony. With reference to its being the first step I am perfectly aware of the strong feeling that necessarily is evoked and the prejudices and prepossessions which arise whenever you are within a thousand miles of touching the question of land. It is a condition of public life at present that we must face that situation, and that whenever we want to get at the truth with reference to valuation we are blocked by those prepossessions. It is poor argument to say you will not have this Bill because it will elicit the truth and because the disclosures which it will make will be made the foundation of certain other Parliamentary proceedings. The object of this Bill is to get at the facts, and to get at them impartially by authorities who are well qualified to deal with them. There is one thing I should like to say with regard to the range of the Bill. It applies to the whole of Scotland. It includes the counties. I am aware that there is a very considerable objection to that in many minds. The Leader of the Opposition last year moved an Amendment for the exclusion of counties from the range of the Bill. It was my duty to oppose that proposal and we still oppose it, and for this reason, that if once you exclude the counties from the provisions of the Bill you will destroy a large part of the value of the returns annually made as a national statistic for national purposes. Take the urgent cases of high values which are unaccounted for or do not appear in the misrepresentations, for they amount to that, of the annual value in the rate book. The grossest cases that we know are cases of suburban areas, and outside the ambit of urban communities there are very serious cases of high value of land which it is said is being held up for the purpose of being utilised afterwards. That introduces a second question. We all know in Scotland and in England what are the serious questions as between town and county. Whenever a town desires to extend its boundaries the county at once comes into the field as an antagonist, and the opposition of the county will be strengthened if there is such a difference between the rate of the county and of the town as there would be if you excluded the counties. In the case of village communities all over Scotland, not in the Highlands only but in the Lowlands, some of the grossest cases are those where people are anxious and willing to feu the land, but land cannot be got on anything like the terms at which it appears in the rate-book at present. Moreover, in Scotland a very large number of police burghs would be excluded if you excluded the counties, because all the police burghs are within the county valuation areas, and they have no machinery for separately working out the Bill. I think I have said enough, therefore, especially on that point with regard to Scotland, to show that you would destroy national statistics and do yourself the disadvantage of not including some of the most serious cases of suburbs and villages, and finally that you would at one sweep exclude the police burghs from the whole scope of the Bill. A very interesting instance came to my notice which I should like to quote. It is from the town of Largs. The town of Largs has a provost who is quite willing to immolate himself or the altar of land reform. He has four acres of agricultural land and the rental on which he is charged is a mere trifle, £4. But the ground is wanted for town purposes for improvements. Two acres of his land are within the burgh and are entered in the valuation roll as of £8 value. Consequently he is only charged on a fourth of the value—or £2, which at 1s. 2d. in the £ makes a charge of 2s. 4d. a year. If he were feuing the land he would value it at £20 an acre, and would not require to pay a single penny of rates. It was proposed, instead of making a charge of rental, to make a charge on value, and they arrived at the value of a piece of ground by taking it at twenty years purchase of the feu value. The provost went on to say—

> "The capital value of my plot in the burgh would thus be £800, and I should be assessed on £34 per annum instead of £2, and should pay 37s. 4d. instead of 2s. 4d. Would this be a right, just, and fair mode of taxation?"

It being his own case one would have expected him to say "No," but what he says is this—

> "What gives value to my two acres is not money I have myself put out, but their proximity to the burgh of Largs, and for the improvements created by the authorities of Largs, past and present — drainage, roads, water, lighting, and sanitary arrangements. These give value to my bit of ground. Owing to this my land should pay its share of the improvements surrounding it, and it is quite right I think that it should be charged its fair share of taxation."

I have slipped into the question of rating, but the House will see that it is strictly relevant to this point. There were four acres, two within the burgh and two outside it. I was interested in this case and I telegraphed to-day to the provost asking if the two acres outside the burghs were of the same value, to which I got this reply—

> "All one field, and of the same value throughout."

So the proposal is, I presume, still to continue for valuation purposes that artificial line cut through that man's land and to have the capital value of 1s. 2d. on half of the field put into the annual statistics for Scotland, and the other half, because it is in the county area, kept out. The thing is not feasible. The effect upon the county I wish only to state in a word. I think it is a mistake, particularly in the landed interest, to object to this proposal, because the person who will be hit will not be the *bona fide* agriculturist. This Bill, if it ever goes in the direction of rating, will not merely find a way for the rating of land, but it will be a scheme to exclude from rating all improvements upon land. Therefore the improving landlord, the agricultural landlord, and the improving tenant will benefit. To the extent to which the capital value of the land is rated it will give *pro tanto* relief to all the other taxpayers in the county. The man who will be hit will be the land speculator, who keeps land in the neighbourhood of towns and in villages; and to the extent to which he is hit the entire body of *bona fide* taxpayers will be relieved. Revelations which have come to the Government have convinced me that it is necessary to have information on an annual and national scale. The Scottish Board of Agriculture, reporting the other day on another Bill, stated that in ordinary cases the value of agricultural land is twenty-five years' purchase. But the Government obtained information in driblets as to how false that estimate is when land has to be transferred compulsorily. The Government paid eighty-five years' purchase in the Rosyth case. The Edinburgh Water Trust paid 136 years' purchase for a piece of land. The War Office bought a piece of land at 240 years purchase; the

Clyde Trust had to pay 435 years' purchase. We are fond of education in Scotland. We do not wish to pay too much for anything, and the only thing we do not grudge paying for is education. But we have got to the grudging stage in Old Kilpatrick, because they wanted two acres of ground for educational purposes, for an addition to a school, and for that they had to pay 600 years purchase. An instance was given me to-day in the parish of Cathcart. I have just received information of a case in East Renfrewshire where 1½ acres were required, and the purchase price was 917 years purchase. What I say is that these may be perfectly sound transactions as between buyer and seller, but if they are, the nation is entitled to know what is the value of its property on a capital basis. The only other fact I wish to mention is that we are having reports from all parts of the world with regard to this matter. The latest report comes from Queensland, where the Statute of 1902 has swept away the last shred of consideration as regards improvements as a factor in any valuation of rateable property for local government purposes. Light is coming to us day by day, and from country after country. I regret very much that we always arouse antagonism when we are intent on anything that affects the land, but I am also aware that there is another danger from the other end of the political scale, and that we should be supposed for a moment to desire to delay this social reform by anything in the nature of injustice. When you wish to take action with reference to any reform, either in the one direction or the other which I have named, it is well to know the actual capital value on which you are going to proceed. That is the scope of this Bill. The preliminary inquiries have been made over and over again. We are resolved to proceed not only with courage but with caution. Should this Bill be rejected the resources of the Constitution are not exhausted. If the Lords reject a procedure in which caution is pre-eminent, they may find themselves face to face with a procedure which at once attacks the problem. The preliminaries of valuation and taxation may not be treated separately, but the whole thing may be combined in one scheme. On the whole, I view the situation rather hopefully—not on account of the language used by the noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill, language in regard to which I think the less said the better. Substantially, what is in this Bill was involved in the Bill discussed in 1902, when it was rejected by seventy-one votes; in 1903, when it was rejected by only thirteen; in 1904, under the next *régime*, when it was passed by sixty-seven votes; in 1905, when it was passed by ninety votes; and in 1906, when it was passed by 258 votes; and last year, when it was passed by 218 votes.

Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Every one of these Bills referred to urban areas alone.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW: My point is that capital valuation without improvements is at the back of the matter, and that the scope of the Bill never affected that principle. It is, as the Leader of the Opposition clearly saw last year, a Committee point. Therefore, the less said the better of any noble Lord who uses language suggesting that a Bill with such a Parliamentary history is a product of the dirty work of the Radical Party.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): Is not the right hon. Gentleman, in the history of many years he has gone over, confusing the Second Reading and the passing of a Bill?

Mr. THOMAS SHAW: I referred to the Second Reading stage. When a person says a Bill passes through the House on its principle he means the Second Reading. My hope arises very largely from the line which has been taken by Lord Lansdowne. I admit that there was considerable force in the point as to the insufficiency of the time available for the consideration of the Bill last year, but that defect is now made good. Every scheme of housing or public improvement is hampered because we had not begun at the beginning—with the valuation of land. The enormous initial cost of land results in the erection of houses which cannot be profitably let at rents within the means of those whom it is desired to house, and I might cite Edinburgh as a case in point. In towns, therefore, the Bill will facilitate better housing and social reform, and in the counties it will not affect to his detriment the *bona fide* agriculturist. If it brings about the doom of the speculator, he will certainly disappear to the advantage of those wider interests so closely affecting the well-being of the community as a whole which it is surely the duty of Parliament to protect. I beg to move.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he rose to move the rejection of the Bill. [A LABOUR MEMBER: Come over here.] First of all, he wished to express his regret that the Government had not given a longer time for the Second Reading. He voted for the guillotine because it seemed quite reasonable that Bills which had occupied a considerable time last session should be hurried through this session. But having obtained those powers he did not think the Government would use them to put the Bill through in half-a-day. The Lord-Advocate appeared to suggest that those people who opposed this Bill were influenced in their action by the prepossessions which attached to property. So far as he was personally concerned he was not influenced by any such considerations, for he did not own a single acre of land and had no prospect of inheriting any. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that this was merely a Bill for a valuation to provide Scotsmen with a new form of "national statistics" in order that they might have more figures to ponder over. They were to go to the expense of collecting all this information simply for the privilege of adding to their statistics. In reality the whole object of the Bill was to prepare a way for a new system of rating. If that were so why should the Government try to throw dust into their eyes by pretending that the Bill was proposing merely a new system of national statistics? The Prime Minister himself had asserted that the principle of the measure was to impose a tax upon land values for on 12th February he said—

> "I turn now to the Land Values Bill. Was this a rashly presented measure containing some unheard of revolutionary proposal which required an extraordinary amount of time for its consideration? During the period of office of the late Government, when there was a large Conservative majority in the House of Commons, Bills embodying the principle contained in the measure of last session were on four separate occasions submitted, and on two occasions they received the approval of the House."

The Lord Advocate had also alluded to the previous Bills dealing with the same subject. With regard to the last of the Bills which the right hon. Gentleman had enumerated it was referred to a Select Committee carefully composed of hon. Members in favour of the principle of taxation of land values and that Committee reported that the measure was not worth proceeding with.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: I think the hon. Member should do the Committee the justice of stating that one of their special recommendations was that before they went any further they required a Valuation Bill.

*MR. HAROLD COX said the Committee recommended that the Bill should not be proceeded with, but that a Valuation Bill should be introduced as a prelude to a new Bill, and this measure was that prelude. The object was the transfer of local taxation from buildings and improvements to the land. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that this Bill was based upon the Report of the Committee, but what did they report? They reported—

> "That a new standard of rating should be substituted for the present standard and that within the category of owners ought to be included owners of feu duties when so ever created."

He ventured to say that the whole of this agitation for taxing land values in Scotland arose among people who wished to tax feu duties, and he challenged the majority of Scottish Members present to go to their constituents and say they would not tax feu duties. The Report of the Select Committee for this said explicitly that "houses and other improvements would be relieved from the burden of rating." The Prime Minister said the same thing at Dunfermline, where he spoke on 22nd October, 1907—

> "A movement for relief so earnestly supported by the municipalities throughout the

country is therefore arrested. If this tax remains for a further period upon your industry and on your houses . . . . it is with those who killed this Bill in the House of Lords that you must settle your account."

As the Bill was first presented, the ambitious minds of Scottish municipalities looked upon it as a means of raising a new form of revenue, but it was now presented as a Bill for relieving them of taxation which was a very different thing. The essence of the Bill according to the Select Committee and according to the Prime Minister, was to relieve houses of local rating. He wanted the House to consider what would be the effect of that relief. In the suburbs there were large houses inhabited by men who had "made their pile." Those men would be relieved of their local taxes and would be charged only on their gardens and the value of the site. The result would be that the occupiers of large houses costing often between £4,000 and £5,000 to build would not pay a single penny upon the fabric of the house but only pay on the bare value of the ground covered. Of course, that loss would have to be made up from somewhere, and it could only be made up by increasing the rates upon those residing in the centre of the town where land was valuable. Therefore, they were simply going to shift the burden of the rates from the suburbs where the well-to-do lived and place it on the shoulders of those who were struggling to make a living in the centre of the town. That was simply a shifting of the burden of taxation from the shoulders of the idle to the shoulders of the industrious. Last session the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a differential rate for income-tax with the object of relieving of taxation those who were earning their incomes so that those who were enjoying incomes which they were not actually earning should pay a higher rate of taxation. That was wise; but here the Government were reversing that principle. Here, as regarded local taxation, they were relieving the people who had unearned incomes and putting the burden on to people who were daily engaged in the struggle to make a living. The Lord Advocate had said a good deal about the importance of the housing question. How was this Bill going to work out as regarded that question in London? They were going to put all the burden on the land. That meant that in order to get their revenue—they must get at least the same revenue as before; some hoped they would get more—they must enormously increase the amount of taxation they charged on everybody in the centre. But in London a great many working-men lived in the centre. It was quite true that they would pay no taxation on the fabric in which they dwelt, but as the same amount of revenue as before had to be got out of the Metropolitan area, if they diminished the burden in the suburbs they must of necessity increase the burden in the centre. Whether the land in the centre was occupied by wealthy bankers or by struggling artisans, the occupier, during the continuance of existing tenancies would have to pay more than before. The case of rural districts was equally striking. In the country there were already a good many complaints that the wealthy residents paid comparatively little rates and that the farmers paid too much, but the effect of the principle of this Bill if carried into operation would be to relieve the wealthy resident of all he now paid except upon his site and garden. The house would be entirely exempted. His contribution to the local revenue would practically disappear, and they would have to put a heavier burden on the fields of the farmer and on the allotment ground of the labourer. That was the policy which the present Ministry recommended to the country. The cry on which the Government were inviting their Party to go to the country was: "Down with the House of Lords which prevents us from relieving wealthy people of taxation in order to put it on the shoulders of farmers and labourers." This was one of the matters to which the Patronage Secretary should devote his attention. The right hon. Gentleman performed his duties with admirable tact so far as he was personally concerned, in keeping the humble followers of the Government in the right lobby. He would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman, that he had to discharge the even more important duty of keeping the Cabinet straight, and that he should prevent the Cabinet from adopting a policy which he with his larger experience of the constituencies must know was not a fighting electoral policy. He would take another illustration. He was sorry he did not see any of the Members for Ireland present; he did not know whether they had realised how this would work out in their country. The Solicitor-General had carried the fiery cross over the channel and made many brilliant speeches in Ireland on the advantage of taxing land values. He wondered whether the hon. and learned Gentleman went down to the rural districts and told the Irish farmers that on the holdings they had recently acquired by the aid of this House they were going to pay an extra tax in order to relieve the landlords of the tax on their houses, and in order to relieve the new hotels which were springing up in Ireland of the rates they paid. He would like to point out to the House that if a land tax was ever imposed it would in the majority of cases be actually more than 20s. in the £. He thought very few people had realised that, but it was a fact, for this reason that, normally, the value of a site was a fifth, a fourth, or perhaps as much as a third of the value of the total subject, namely, the value of the fabric and the site together. Therefore, if they were going to get the same revenue the rate levied upon the land alone must be at least three times the rate previously levied upon land and houses together; so that wherever the previous rate was over 6s. 8d. the new rate would be over 20s. in the £. During the recess he had the pleasure of reading many interesting articles on this subject by the hon. Member for West Bradford, who had kindly furnished him with some correspondence which had passed between the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Solicitor-General for Scotland. The correspondence was published in the *Clarion*. A difference of opinion seemed to have arisen in the minds of the readers of that journal as to whether the editor was accurate in saying that the new rate might be higher than the present rate. The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme appeared to have written to the Solicitor-General asking whether he was justified in saying that that was the hon. and learned Gentleman's view. The Solicitor-General on 16th December last, replied as follows—

> DEAR MR. WEDGWOOD,—I am duly favoured with yours of the 13th inst, enclosing print of a letter published by you in the *Clarion* of 2nd December. My proposal with regard to rating on the basis of land values is to take the value of the land, apart from any buildings or improvements upon it, as the basis of rating. Of course, if the value of the land alone is less than the value of the composite subject, then the rating may be higher, although the sum raised by rates may remain the same . . . . You will thus see that your account of the proposal I advocate is accurate. I propose to delete buildings from the standard of rating, and to take land alone as the standard. As a necessary preliminary we must have a valuation of the land.—Yours very truly,
>
> ALEX. URE.

He would like to read some comments on this letter made by the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme and also published in the *Clarion*—

> "There is a celebrated freehold potworks in the borough of Hanley. This factory has recently been revalued for assessment purposes at about £1,000 per annum, and the unimproved value of the land was one-third of the total value. Rates in Hanley are 10s. in the £, so these potters pay about £500 per year. The unimproved value of the land in all Hanley happens to be about one-third of the total rateable value, so that if these rates were based on the land value alone, and the same sum total had to be raised, rates would stand not at 10s. in the £, but at 30s. in the £. To ask a landlord to pay 30s. in the £ to the municipality (besides State taxes on the same land) does sound like confiscation."

*MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): May I ask the hon. Member to complete the quotation?

*MR. HAROLD COX: With pleasure. He goes on to say—

> "Yet these potters would obviously be better off, because, while they would pay just the same of £500 a year, yet any improvements that they might make in their factory would go rate free."

He thought the hon. Member had made a little mistake in that. The mistake was that he assumed that the same rate would be raised exactly from the same spot.

*MR. WEDGWOOD: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. friend. The point is that our taxation is one-third on land and two-thirds on buildings. Exactly the same proportion obtains for the whole borough of Hanley—one-third land, and two-thirds buildings, so that we are in exactly the position of of the average landlord.

*MR. HAROLD COX said he was much obliged to the hon. Member, who was quite right on that point. [Laughter.] He could not see what the laughter was about. The hon. Member had taken a particular case which coincided with the average. His own point was that every case did not coincide with the average. There were a good many other cases in existence besides that particular case, and the general effect would be to relieve some people of local taxation and to increase the local taxation on others. In the majority of cases the people relieved would be rich suburban residents, and the owners of country mansions, and the people who would have to pay more would be the people who were working hard to earn their living, either in the central districts of our great towns or upon the land. It was very important that they should have the opinion of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme, because he thought they might regard him on this matter as the Leader of the Cabinet. Ministers followed him with some reluctance perhaps, but still they followed him. The Lord Advocate had referred to the case of Queensland. Might he ask whether the hon. and learned Gentleman had read the whole of the Report?

MR. THOMAS SHAW indicated that he had.

*MR. HAROLD COX thought the hon. and learned Gentleman had not. If he had read the whole of it, he would not have given the account of it which he did. It was quite true that the first page of the Report suggested that the system of taxing land values in Queensland had had the effect which his friends here desired of preventing or at any rate checking speculation in land. It had had that effect in Queensland as it would have in any new colony. The reason was that land was very cheap, and therefore the amount of interest which anyone lost in holding for a rise was very small—a negligible quantity. That was stated at page 17 of the Report. It was very different when they came to an old country like England or Scotland. The interest a man lost when holding land for a rise in price was not a negligible quantity, and he had a strong motive to realise it as soon as he possibly could. Thus in an old country, land speculation was automatically checked, whereas in a new country a special tax to check speculation might be desirable and could easily be made effective. Again, in seeking for what was called "prairie" value, it was not possible to argue from a new to an old country. The Henry Georgites wanted to go back to the unimproved or "prairie" value of the land. In order to get at that value they had to strip the land of all the improvements made through centuries of civilisation, but in a new colony they had the unimproved value naked before their eyes. There were millions of acres of unimproved land, never touched by the hand of man. This land had a market value as unimproved land, so that they had at once a standard by which they could compare unimproved and improved land. It could be said: "We will take the market value of the unimproved land as the standard of rating." But before they could do that here they had to go through a very elaborate process of separating the value of the improvements from the value of the unimproved land. If the Lord Advocate would read as far as page 14, he would see that the author of that very valuable Report pointed out another great difference between Queensland and this country. Local authorities there did hardly any of the things which local authorities did here, and therefore they required very little revenue Among the public services which were not undertaken by the local bodies in Queensland were the following: Poor relief, orphanages, education, police, criminal prosecutions and prisons, hospitals and asylums, registration of deaths. But these services accounted for the great bulk of local expenditure in this country. The principal public services paid for locally in Queensland were main roads, bridges, sanitary inspection, and the removal of noxious weeds. That showed at once the different conditions that obtained in Queensland as compared with this country. But as was pointed out most clearly in this Report the construction of main roads and bridges was a direct benefit to the land and the land, therefore, justly paid for it. In the same way in the time of Henry VIII. an Act was passed in England for paving the Strand and the landlords of the adjoining land had to pay for it. The Report further pointed out that the attempt to levy rates on the intrinsic value of the land in Brisbane for such services as the removal of garbage "was rating run mad" and that the individual benefited ought to pay for it. On page 15 there was a very interesting admission. A proposal seemed to have been made that the Brisbane General Hospital should be paid for on a land-value basis, and this proposal was warmly supported by "those likely to be unfairly benefited thereby." The author of the Report said that this was an unfair proposal, and he kept referring to it and used it as an illustration for many other criticisms. He came to a still more important admission. The writer of the Report said that while the system of rating upon unimproved land value had worked satisfactorily generally—

> "It is by no means certain that the system will be found to give equal satisfaction when it may be necessary to apply it to mixed sorts of lands, such, for instance, as city and suburban land taken together."

But that was exactly the condition that had to be dealt with here in almost every municipality in the kingdom; so that the very Report which the Lord-Advocate said supported his case for the Bill, showed that when they came to British conditions they could not apply the system of rating upon unimproved land value. Again on page 20 the writer said—

> "Manifestly there is a limit to the burden which will be accepted upon any single class of property."

Was that also in favour of the Bill? And again—

> "So long as the local tax raised from land is not excessive and is expended upon services from which the land rated derives reasonable benefit . . . . there does not appear at present much likelihood of discontent in Queensland. . . . . As taxes increase, however, and especially as fresh duties have to be undertaken, all the issues will be less simple; other forms of property—as was instanced in the fight over the Brisbane hospitals question—will be looked to for contribution as well as land."

There they had the author of this Report saying that as soon as conditions were introduced at all analagous to conditions in this country they would have to introduce our system. Leaving this Report to the further study of the Lord-Advocate, he wished to touch very briefly on what he might call the theoretical basis of this whole delusion. He had read many speeches on this question and nearly all of them had used the phrase that it was wrong to tax enterprise. That was one of the phrases which people went on repeating until they came to believe that they were true. But if one came to think of it, if they wanted to have revenue at all, they must tax enterprise. It was enterprise that produced wealth, and it was only from wealth that they could get revenue. Of course, if they said that they were going to tax the owners of a particular form of property and to intercept the wealth that would otherwise go to them, and confiscate it for the benefit of the public, that could be done. That was the original idea of the authors of the taxation of land values; but the Prime Minister had declared that he would not disregard existing contracts, so that this scheme fell through. All that remained was the delusion that enterprise ought to be exempt from taxation. But he would point out that this delusion had been abandoned even in the Bill itself, because railways were exempted from the operation of the Bill. Was not a railway an enterprise? Why then did the Bill propose to exempt railways from the relief that would be given to other forms of enterprise? For the simple reason that if the railways were taxed only upon the prairie value of the land occupied many rural parishes would lose 90 per cent. of their present revenue. That was too grotesquely absurd even for the authors of the present Bill. The delusion that all taxation should be placed on land largely arose from forgetting that taxes were paid by persons and not by things. The money came out of an individual's pockets, and the whole question that had to be considered was whether it was just to draw extra taxation from one individual in order to relieve another individual. That was the whole essence of the Bill, and it would never have obtained the temporary popularity that it had if once the people had realised that taxes were paid by persons. They must adhere to the canon of taxation laid down by Adam Smith that people should pay according to their ability. That was the only sound canon of taxation. [AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR BENCHES: They do not do it now.] That was the ideal to be aimed at. But the authors of this Bill had set before them an entirely different ideal. They wanted to put the burden on the owners of a particular form of property and to exempt from taxation men who were worth ten times as much. Who were the owners of the value of the land in this country? Very large portions of it were owned by insurance companies, trade unions, friendly societies, and building societies who had invested their funds in land values and ground rents and would be the first to suffer if this Bill became law. The only plausible case for the Bill was the alleged holding up of land for the rise in value. The Lord-Advocate had given a number of illustrations where land had been bought for from 600 to 900 years purchase. That sounded very terrible. But what did it mean? It meant that if a man had got a piece of land which was yielding next to nothing, somebody came along and said: "I will pay you so much for that land to use as a site for a house or a factory." Even if this price was quite moderate it would amount to many years purchase as compared with the previous low value of the land. It was the old percentage fallacy so much favoured on tariff reform platforms. It was assumed always that when a man refused to sell his land he was necessarily holding out for an exorbitant price. That was not so. Everyone who had experience knew that the landowner went to a valuer and said: "What ought I to get for that land?" And the valuer said: "£500." He meant that that was a fair value if he could get a purchaser, but then no purchaser might appear for twenty years. He would give a particular case in Scotland. There was a town which had a belt of 600 acres of unoccupied land round it. For all practical purposes of town extension one acre was as good as another; but the town only expanded at the rate of ten acres a year. A friend of his owned 200 acres, and he told him that he might sell a single acre at £1,000, but he did not get that every year, or even once in two or three years. It was a mere chance when he would get it. Were they to argue that the whole of these 200 acres was worth £200,000?

MR. THOMAS SHAW: He can only get the market value of the day for the land for the whole plot of 200 acres, or for 100 acres, or for a single acre.

*MR. HAROLD COX: That is rather an interesting explanation.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: It is in the text of the Bill. I am afraid my hon. friend has not read the Bill.

*MR. HAROLD COX: I am familiar with the text of the Bill, but I do not think the right hon. and learned Gentleman has carried his explanation far enough. Does he mean that the valuer is to take into account the whole area, or the whole area that belongs to a particular individual, or all the area in a particular neighbourhood? Because that makes a great difference.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: He is to take into account every item at present on the roll. If that item shall not yield a certain sum in excess of the market value of the day, the market value, and that alone, is to be reckoned and each item is to be taken with reference to its surroundings, and its postponed realisation, which is always an element in value.

*MR. HAROLD COX: I think the valuer in Scotland will have a somewhat difficult task.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: If my hon. friend appeals to me, I can say that it is an everyday experience in Scotland. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.]

*MR. HAROLD COX: I can only apologise for not having a Scottish mind. It seems to me, a mere Englishman, that if I found a plot of land had been sold for £1,000, I should be inclined to think that another plot next to it and of exactly the similar extent should be valued at the same price.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: At the market value.

*MR. HAROLD COX: But if nobody knows whether there is a market for it or not? The assumption of the authors of this Bill is that there is always a market. That was the doctrine they proceeded upon. They always assumed that the public was yearning to buy the land and the wicked landowner refused to sell. If it were true, as it was undoubtedly true in a few exceptional cases, that people held back land for a rise, or from sheer churlishness, then the proper remedy would be that the local authority should in such cases have the power to take the land compulsorily at a fair valuation, from the man who was misusing his powers. But why should attacks be made on all the landowners of the country because one landowner or half a dozen or even a larger number were unreasonable. It was claimed by the authors of the Bill that they would, by this measure, compel owners to sell. They said so bluntly, but why was it right to compel A to sell land for the benefit of B, both being private persons? B might be just as much a curmudgeon as A was. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had wisely repealed the export duty on coal, although the existence of that duty tended to lower the price of coal in this country. It seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman had done so rightly; because, the State had no right to say to those engaged in any particular industry, that they must sell at a lower price than they wished. That was equally unfair whether applied to the coal trade or to dealings in land. As to the alleged holding up of land in the neighbourhood of towns, the Government itself had shown by an Act which they passed last session the impossibility of putting into effect this Bill. In the Small Holdings Act of last session there was a clause specially designed to enable small holders to obtain land in the neighbourhood of towns for the purpose of market gardens. That clause provided that the county council should have power to hire such land at an agricultural rent and to sublet it to small holders, but that the landlord should have the power of re-entering as soon as the land obtained an urban value. In the meantime who was to pay the land values tax? Clearly not the landlord for he had been compulsorily deprived of the use of his land; clearly not the county council which only acted as an intermediary between the landlord and the small holder; and finally not the small holder who could not afford to pay an urban site values tax out of the produce of a market garden? If hon. Members looked at this Bill he thought they would find that the whole genesis of it was due to the late Mr. Henry George. The idea that the millennium could be secured by confiscating the value of land was popular twenty years ago. He remembered when Mr. Henry George's book appeared in this country, he, with many other advanced Radicals, welcomed it as a new gospel. He recollected going to a meeting in the East End of London which was addressed by the late Mr. Arnold Toynbee—a man who had given his whole life to working out these social problems. Arnold Toynbee tried to demonstrate to them the futility of this new gospel of Henry George and said that it did not touch the real social sore. But they were too impatient to listen. They thought it was a new gospel and they shouted him down. But he was right; Henry Georgism did not touch the social sores from which Great Britain was suffering. It might in a new country deal with particular grievances, but in an old country it was useless. It was not access to land they wanted but access to capital. It was useless to give a man land unless they gave him the capital to work it. He appealed to his fellow Liberals on that side of the House to be careful how they voted on this question. He was not, he believed, generally regarded as an out-and-out party man, but he said quite sincerely that he did believe most firmly that the duty rested upon all of them to strengthen the Liberal Party to the utmost of their power, because he was convinced that the Liberal Party was the only political force that could save the country from the disaster of protection. He therefore appealed to his hon. friends not to link the fortunes of the Liberal Party to a system of taxation which as soon as it was understood, would be universally condemned by the common sense and the common honesty of the people of the country. He begged to move.

*MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple), in seconding the Amendment, said he felt he owed an apology to Scottish Members for intervening in the debate. All he could plead in extenuation was that no one recognised more than he did their ability to manage their own affairs and their own land questions, and although he had been in this House for more than seven years, this was the first occasion on which he had intervened in a Scottish debate. He might say that he would not have intervened on this occasion if it had not been for certain statements which appeared in the King's Speech, and also for certain statements appearing in usually well inspired Liberal newspapers. In the King's Speech they read that the English Land Valuation Bill was to be introduced during the present session, and they also saw it stated in the newspaper to which he had referred that the Land Valuation Bill was to be on the same lines as the one now before the House. If that statement was true the Government was flying a kite with this Scottish Land Values Bill. If it was successful in this House and if it passed in the House of Lords then at once an English Valuation Bill would be introduced, on the same lines as this and it was because he wanted to prevent as far as he could what in his opionion, would be a catastrophe to the Liberal Party, that he was taking the stand he was that afternoon. It seemed to him that the promoters of this Bill were far too romantic and far too unbusinesslike. What they said was: "Give us our Valuation Bill and then we will reorganise the whole system of rating; we will deal with the housing question, abolish slums and provide good houses for all the working men." These were all very excellent ideas and he had sincere and absolute sympathy with them. But he was one of those plain people who before they gave a blank cheque to anyone, even people whom they trusted, as he trusted the present Government, liked to know how the cheque was to be filled up and how the money was to be devoted. The promoters of this Bill did not pretend that when they got the Bill it would be the acme of their desire. They said "let us value the whole of Scotland not only the urban but the rural part" on what he thought was a somewhat fantastic basis "and then we will produce our rating Bill and tell you how we propose to deal with the matter." In other words, they asked for machinery of rather an expensive kind and did not tell the House whether it was to be used for a motor car or a perambulator. What he wanted to get at, however, was the whole of the Government scheme, and then he would be able to see how far he could go with them and how far he should refrain from going. At present the Government had not made up their mind, on a point that would be vital to thousands of electors in this country, viz. the question of existing contracts. They had heard the Lord Advocate, the Prime Minister, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer each say that they did not intend to interfere with existing contracts in any way; but the Select Committee, presided over by the Solicitor-General for Scotland, at whose bidding this Bill was introduced, said that they had given the most anxious consideration to the case presented for the exemption, of existing owners of feu duties and it was impossible in their opinion to accede to the claim. Again they said, that as between the feuar after and the feuar before the measure came into force, the result of excluding existing feu contracts would be most unreasonable. Thus they had the policy advocated by the Prime Minister, the Lord Advocate and the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared impossible and unreasonable by the Select Committee. They therefore ought to have very definite information from the Government on this point. From the evidence given before the Select Committee it appeared that there were a great many burghs in Scotland which were in the same position as the city of Manchester. The city of Manchester was covered with chief rents, whilst the Scottish burghs were covered with feu rents. These rents, as a rule, were not held by large investors, but by small ones, consisting, besides individuals, of small trusts, small charitable societies, and friendly societies; and if the Government put a tax upon one small investor and not on another the former would want to know the reason why. He was not one of those who said they should never touch existing contracts. Both Parties in this House had done it, especially in the case of the Agricultural Holdings Acts, but he did say that having regard to the grave considerations involved in touching them it should be first proved that it was essential and for the good of the community. They had heard a great deal from the Lord Advocate as to the effect of his proposals upon the building trade. Personally, he thought any proposals to rate feus would hamper the building trade. They all knew that the class of people who built working-class houses were usually men of small capital. The two things essential to a builder with small capital were cheap money and the possession of his deeds for the purpose if necessary of mortgaging them. It would be admitted by all reasonable men that if feus were rated they would no longer be gilt-edged securities. Trustees would no longer purchase them, nor would anybody else who wanted to get a fixed and certain income. The natural consequence would be that a ready sale would not be obtained for them, and landlords would want their money down instead of selling their land in feu. That would mean an enormous difficulty. Instead of buying the land on feu and having the purchase price running at 4 per cent. interest, the builder would have to pay money down. He would no doubt be able to borrow two-thirds of the money, but then, when he began to build and required more money, he would only have a second mortgage to offer. People did not like second mortgages, and they generally meant a high rate of interest. But even if the builder struggled through, he would obtain a decreased price for the increased feu he had created, and then would have difficulty in obtaining a permanent mortgage, for mortgages would have a tendency to fall into disrepute, and the Government would admit that when site values were taxed every trustee holding a mortgage would have to have every mortgage re-valued to see if they would have to be called in. Rating site values would also tend to the erection of vertical buildings instead of lateral, because every builder would naturally endeavour to make the best possible use of his site. It would also create a difficulty with garden cities, because where a man had to pay so much more for a garden he would do with as little garden as possible. Those were some of the difficulties of the housing question, the only argument he deduced from it was that if he was asked to break existing contracts and to rate site values, he must be shown the corresponding advantages of the new system. So far he had not been shown them. If he turned to the words of the Committee on this very theme, he found they said that the present system was not to find a new source of taxation, but merely to increase the number of ratepayers, and to re-allocate their burdens. He was glad to read those words, because they put an end to all the loose talk about increased revenues. No longer would people be able to say they had found a new El Dorado out of which would come the money to provide old-age pensions and build battleships. There were only two sources of revenue in burghs which were not rated up to the hilt, and they were vacant land, which was being held up, and land which was not used to its fullest capacity. So far as dealing with those questions was concerned, he was prepared to deal with them at once, but he did not think all the paraphernalia of a Valuation Bill to be followed by a Rating Bill was required. A Bill was introduced in 1903 by the hon. Member for East Edinburgh which dealt with this matter in a very simple way, and in his opinion a Bill might be brought in to deal with these two classes of property in an equally simple manner. The fact was that the problem of unearned increment was at the root of this matter, and he was in favour of taxing unearned increment wherever he could get at it. But in justice it must be remembered that unearned increment did not apply to land only. Let them take the case of two men, each of whom had £1,000. One invested his money in a farm, and another in Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway stock. Owing to good farming and perhaps an increase in the price of wool because the woollen trade was good, the farms increased in value. Owing to good times in the cotton trade the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Stock also increased in value. Now both these investments provided work and both were for the public good, but neither of the investors did any work themselves but simply drew his income. Let them suppose each of these men sold his investment for £1,200. On what ground of equity or morals were they to tax the man who earned his profit out of the land, and not the man who obtained his out of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway stock. Then there was the question of restrictive covenants. In his opinion the Government had not dealt with this matter in a satisfactory manner. Let the House read Subsection 2 of Clause 3. Now what kind of a man was this assessor? All they knew was that he was not a valuator, and he was not a lawyer. Yet what was the assessor to be asked to do? He was to be asked to go behind the provisions of a deed which was placed before him, and investigate the thoughts in the minds of the people who made the deed at the time it was made. He had always held that that was the most difficult question of equity jurisdiction, yet these assessors were to decide such questions as that. He was sorry for the assessor when that gentleman came to realise the duties imposed upon him in this Bill. He was to go to a site and to assume that the buildings and all the improvements on that site were taken from it, and to value the site. He could value it in three ways. He could either have regard to what had actually been erected on adjacent sites or what ought to have been erected if these sites had been used to their fullest capacity, or he could value it without having any regard whatever to the adjacent sites. The assessor was not told in the Bill the way in which he was to proceed. Then he was told nothing whatever as to what he was to do with regard to rights of light. He was told he was to take notice of servitudes, but nothing about rights of light and air. He was not told whether he was to have any regard to them or not, yet those rights were very important to property owners, and lawyers knew they were the cause of much trouble and incidentally of much remuneration. His main objection to this Bill, however, was that it was not confined, as all previous Bills had been, to the urban districts. It was to extend over the whole of Scotland, and to apply to all districts, urban and rural. Now the Select Committee said their object was that rates might be imposed, not on the annual value of the property, but on the annual value of the site apart from everything upon it, and without regard to any improvement that might have been made. One of the first results of it would be that every shooting-lodge would be exempt, and as there were 3,000,000 of acres in Scotland devoted to shooting that was a very important point. He would give an example. There was a shooting-lodge, with which he was familiar, about five miles from Crieff, built right out on the moors, which, with its keeper's lodge and kennels, occupied an acre of ground. The adjoining land was moorland, and let at 5s. an acre per year. If the assessor was to assume that that lodge was removed from its site the site became just bare moorland, and instead of the place being rated at £100 a year, it would be rated at 5s. He did not think the farmers, the small holders, or the working-classes would approve of that. Another question which bothered him was how these assessors, when they went round to make these valuations, were to decide about rights of way. When those rights of way were doubtful rights, they had a very serious effect indeed on the valuations of property. How also were these assessors to regard mines and minerals unworked? The assessors were not mining experts, and it would be a very difficult duty to devolve upon them. Again, if an assessor was looking at a site to decide whether it was suitable for building, he would have also to decide whether there was a proper water supply. Was he to go about with a divining rod? He personally desired information upon these points. He did not for a moment profess to say he understood the Scottish system of rating, but the House ought to have full information with regard to the question of existing contracts and the other points he had raised. The real Bill ought to be produced instead of the one before the House, which was only a prelude to the one which was to come. It was because he wanted full information upon all these points, most of which were no doubt capable of being satisfactorily explained that he seconded the Resolution proposed by his hon. friend.

Amendment proposed—

> "To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs) said he intervened in this debate for a few moments because he had the honour of introducing in 1906 the Taxation of Land Values Bill—the second reading of which was passed by such a large majority. The House was indebted to English Members for the interest which they took in Scotland. On the previous day an Amendment was moved to the Small Holdings Bill for Scotland, by an English Member. Now an Amendment to the Bill before the House had been moved and seconded by English Members. These gentlemen were evidently under the impression that the Scottish people were not sufficiently alive to their own interests. During the speech of the Lord Advocate, his hon. friend the Member for the Ayr Burghs made an interjection to the effect that the previous Land Values Bills, to which the Lord Advocate alluded, had reference only to Urban sites. He failed to appreciate the relevancy of that interruption. One thing which particularly struck him was that the Minority Report of the Select Committee on the 1906 Bill did not recognise the principle of the Taxation of Land Values in any shape or form. In that respect they differed entirely from the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in 1901. The Minority Report of the 1906 Select Committee said—

> "If a change must be made in the existing system, the proposals of the present Bill for the separate taxation of site values are inequitable and impracticable."

Yet Lord Balfour of Burleigh—who was one of those who signed the Minority Report of the Local Taxation Committee in 1901, stated that a separate valuation was possible, feasible, even desirable, and could be done at moderate cost. Then again, Lord Lansdowne, at Glasgow, said with reference to the evidence of Dr. Murray, before the Select Committee, that that evidence formed the most valuable literature that had been produced in regard to the question of land values. But Dr. Murray ran counter to the views of Lord Balfour, and stated that there was no reason why a community who gave value to the land should reap any benefit therefrom; and that the present system of valuation and taxation was in every respect fair, and should not be altered. On this question Liberals did not differ so much as the Party opposite. One of the hon. Members for Liverpool recently issued a leaflet in which he enumerated a long and marvellous list of political goods which he desired to stock—among them was the taxation of land values. Another Conservative representing a Liverpool constituency also was in favour of a similar measure. The Member for Preston seemed to assume that they in Scotland had been living in Mars for a considerable time, and did not know the conditions which existed in their own country. One of the underlying principles of the Bills on taxation of land values was that everyone who derived benefit from the land ought to contribute his fair share to local taxation. The hon. Member for Preston seemed to forget that there was a great deal of vacant land which was not allowed to go into the market, and which was either inadequately rated or not at all. The blot in the present system was that those who improved their property were penalised, while those who neglected it seemed to be encouraged to do so. In this week's *Engineering* bitter complaint was made in the leading article that such crushing restrictions in the way of taxation were imposed upon those who employed machinery. The same thing held good in respect to erections. Seven years ago he himself had a slight financial interest in a firm that acquired by lease two acres of land in the North of Scotland. Before this firm acquired it, the ground was entered in the Valuation Roll at £2 per acre; but the proprietors declined to lease it for less than £150 an acre per annum. He did not know of any case which was freer from complications, and which better showed the iniquity of the present system, than one in the North of Scotland. It was the case of a small town that adjoined a famous golf-course, which many Members might know. The population numbered 4,000 people—mostly in poor circumstances. The town council expended over £25,000 on improvements, in order to make this town a health resort. Six months before the improvements were completed, the Superior made it known that he would grant no more sites except at double the feu-duty. He was remonstrated with, and appealed to by the town council, but in vain. He declined to alter his conditions; and in answer to a letter from the town clerk stated that he was—

> "Exceedingly thankful there was a House of Lords which would extract the teeth of the Radical Government."

He (Mr. Sutherland) put it to the House whether in view of such a condition of things as that, some remedy was not urgently needed. The other day the President of the Board of Trade referred to the exorbitant sums which had to be paid by railway companies in the acquisition of land. A great authority told them a good many years ago that over £50,000,000 sterling, above the maximum value of the land, had been paid by railway companies. Cases were not unknown where the price was raised, because out of a garret window it would be possible to see a train pass! It was high time that a law should be passed whereby the proprietor of land would pay his just and due share of local taxation to the community, instead of, as at present, transferring his burden to other shoulders. To every man who had an interest in the land and used it this Bill would bring the just fruit of his labour. He did not say that the measure would bring the millennium while they waited—but he did affirm that it would help them to solve several questions—among others, those of housing and of the unemployed—which would have to be dealt with not merely with knowledge, but with sympathy. Scotland had sent a large majority of Liberals to that House. If they omitted to do their duty in connection with this Bill—a Bill which was eminently desired by their country—he did not think they would be asked to come back.

Mr. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich): This is not a very interesting subject, and I thought it was impossible to make it interesting until I heard the speech of the hon. Member for Preston. If we are to judge by the speech just made no attempt is going to be made to meet the arguments of the hon. Member. The difficulty in dealing with this subject arises from the fact that it is quite impossible to ascertain what the object of the Government is in introducing this Bill. The Lord-Advocate began with the evident intention of trying to make the House believe that the object was merely to obtain information. But, though that may be a considerable part of the object, it is obvious that if it were the real object of the Government to obtain information which would enable them to consider the system of rating, the real way to obtain it would be to select two or three representative areas in Scotland. That could be done at very little expense and would have given for this purpose all the information actually available. But that is not what the Government desire. They have already admitted in Scotland that the real object is to have the whole of Scotland re-taxed. Last year the Government were asked over and over again what their object was in imposing this on Scotland; and the Solicitor-General for Scotland then said that in the Valuation Act of 1854 no valuation was given by the Government of the day. That is an argument not in favour of the hon. and learned Gentleman's point of view, because in that case there was no change in the rating. That Act only increased the rating. What is this going to cost? An estimate has been made and very good round has been goiven for it that this will cost the city of Glasgow alone at least £500,000.

An HON. MEMBER: What does Henry say?

Mr. BONAR LAW: I will come to that in a moment. This estimate was given by Dr. Murray, of Glasgow. Dr. Murray has given great study to this question, and I may remind hon. Members who have made many speeches, or rather one speech in many places, on this subject that there are few better judges on this question than Dr. Murray. I am not going to give the House the basis on which this estimate was made, but I will give certain figures to show what otherwise may be somewhat overlooked. Assuming, it is said, that the owner of the land is simply to give his own guess of the value and that there is no objection on the part of the assessor, that valuation will cost nothing and it will be worth nothing. But if it is to be done by these gentlemen in the same way as they would deal with land they were going to sell or to buy, it will impose a monstrous burden on the country. I say, therefore, it is quite incredible to suppose that even the Government would have imposed that burden if the object had been merely to obtain this information. Is it the object of the Government to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1906? If that is the object it is perfectly plain and intelligible. A majority of the Committee endorsed fully the views of the Solicitor-General for Scotland, and now a somewhat belated convert is the most prominent advocate in Scotland of the views of Henry George. There is no difference between the views of that Committee and Henry George. They recommended a change in the basis of value because it would enable the community to obtain part of that which belonged to them. Mr. George proposed to take the whole of it, and if it does belong to the community it is the whole you ought to take and not a part. If that is the object of the Government they ought to state it honestly, and not do what the Lord-Advocate did to-day, that is, try to get reluctant followers to take this big fence by telling them this is only a means of endeavouring to get more statistical information about Scotland. It is very germane to the question whether this Bill ought or ought not to be passed to consider what are the practical results of dealing with this question by the Government proposals. The result is a very great one, and it is one of the most remarkable achievements of the present Government. The Government have succeeded in doing two things. In the first place they have depreciated the value of a particular kind of security which was made a trustee security by Act of Parliament; they have depreciated that security to the extent of 20 per cent., apart altogether from the fall in other gilt-edged securities. I do not think that represents the whole of the depreciation. I have consulted legal friends of mine in Glasgow who are trustees and hold a good deal of this kind of security, and they all tell me that trustees would like to sell it, but they cannot sell feu duties at the present time. Therefore, the only feu duties which come into the market are those which cannot be held. Not only have the Government reduced that security obviously by some 20 per cent., but they have made it altogether unsaleable. Now, what benefit has anyone derived from that proceeding? Of course, nobody has gained, and that is an illustration of what is a universal truth, that all predatory schemes of this kind injure individual classes of the community, and it is quite impossible by such schemes to benefit any class whatever. But the Government have done more than that, for they have largely interfered with building operations in Scotland. That is a fact that must be obvious. The system which for a very long time has prevailed in Scotland is the system of feu duties, by which the owner of the land takes payment, not in cash but in perpetual burdens imposed upon the land. The result of that is that the builder does not need to be possessed of the cash necessary to purchase the land; he only needs the capital required to erect the buildings, because the owner accepts the buildings as security. Obviously under the proposals now made no landowner will sell his land on those terms, and consequently building can only take place where the builder has not only the capital to erect a building, but also the hard cash required to pay for the land. I had occasion last autumn to make a statement which I am very glad to be able to repeat here. I said that nothing more scandalous had ever happened under any Government than that the Solicitor-General for Scotland, who represents that Department of the Government which is responsible for legislation of this kind, should have gone about Scotland conducting a crusade in favour of the taxation of feu duties, and that then the Prime Minister should have informed a deputation as though he heard of it for the first time, that the Government had no intention of taxing feu duties. The Solicitor-General took exception to that statement and said that if anybody had asked the Prime Minister at any time that same question he would have given the same answer. But surely that is no answer. The Prime Minister is a Scotsman, and he knew the effect of what was being done, and he did not need to wait to be asked. His duty was to have stopped something which was doing a great deal of harm in Scotland. Someone wrote a letter to a Glasgow paper stating that the writer had written to the Prime Minister and that he had received a reply marked "private." The writer said he would like to publish the Prime Minister's letter, but no notice was taken of it, and the inference clearly is that had it been published it would not have borne out the statement of the Solicitor-General. Clearly the Government were deliberately waiting on this question to see which way the cat was going to jump, and what induced the Prime Minister finally to throw over the Solicitor-General was the discovery that this class of security is held not only by ordinary capitalists, whose opposition they expected, but largely by friendly societies and others whose votes they hoped to get. It is difficult to find what is the object of the Government in promoting this Bill. The Lord-Advocate told us it was to get information. We got from the Solicitor-General last year a clear statement of the object of the Bill. He stated that its objects were, first, to make the owners of vacant land pay their share of local taxation; and, secondly, to make the owners of land which was built upon, but not utilised to the fullest extent, pay their proper share of local taxation. There is a great deal to be said in favour of both these objects. If it could be shown that there is a considerable amount of land held up for the sake of getting a rise later on, the Government have a right to step in and put an end to that state of things. But even admitting that the evil does exist, that obviously could be remedied with proposals far short of altering the whole system of rating and making that system apply to the whole area of Scotland, rural as well as urban. I do not personally believe that there is any serious evil of that kind existing. The hon. Member for Preston says that the delusion about this Bill is that we are not going to tax enterprise. I do not think that is the real delusion, but some vague thing called the unearned increment. The Solicitor-General gave an illustration last year in which he said that a certain piece of land in Edinburgh which had been valued at something like £2,750 a year, was suddenly sold for £100,000, and buildings were put on it to the extent of £40,000, and therefore its rating value was enormously increased. What these Henry Georgites and the Solicitor-General lose sight of is the effect of compound interest on these transactions. Take for example, the £100,000 I have mentioned. When did that land become worth £100,000? It had not been worth it long, and at the most five or ten years, or else the owner was a fool not to have sold it earlier. What hon. Members leave out in cases of that kind is the fact that the owner of that property would have been much richer if he had sold his land for a small sum and got compound interest than if he held it and got a much larger sum for it later on. Take the case of this £100,000 mentioned by the Solicitor-General. If the owner had sold it twenty-five years ago for £40,000, compound interest at 4 per cent. would have made him richer than when he sold it for £100,000. Although the evil complained of may exist to some extent, I think the ordinary law of supply and demand would make an owner in an instance like that take a fair price for his land now instead of waiting for the chance of getting a higher price later on. The conclusion that there is not a great deal in it is based upon the experience of the city of Glasgow. There in the city area there are some 3,000 acres of unoccupied building land. If the city of Glasgow increase only at the same rate at which it has increased for the last twenty years, it will take fifty or sixty years for that 3,000 acres to be built upon. I will assume it is taken up now and that it is valued at the price which can now be obtained for it. What would be the effect? It would be that the city would get £2,500 from rates whereas the total amount of rates levied in Glasgow is something like £1,500,000. This very small proportion in my opinion does not justify a complete change in the system of rating. If that is what the Government are aiming at they ought to show that this evil does exist and prove it by evidence, and then I am sure the majority of this House would be perfectly ready to take whatever steps are necessary to put down what in that case would be an admitted evil. Instead of doing that the Government propose to alter the system of rating. The Solicitor-General gave a third reason. He said that the object of the Bill was to enable the man who had erected an expensive dwelling to pay a smaller quantity of rates and to enable the man who had a less expensive dwelling to pay a proportionately larger sum. The scheme before us I believe to be an absolutely impracticable one. And in support of that view I will quote the opinion of the Select Committee, who stated that the valuation of land is from the nature of the case purely a matter of opinion, that absolute accuracy is necessarily unattainable, and that everything depends upon the skill and impartiality of the valuer. That is pretty much an admission that an accurate valuation is unattainable. The whole system on which capital land values are going to be rated is impossible. The theory of this Bill is that somebody is going to look at a site on which there are buildings, to imagine that those buildings are taken away, and then to say off-hand: "I can tell you in two minutes what the value of that land is." But on what possible principle can you get the value of the site except on the principle of the annual return which the site value will give? There is no other method. Supposing that anybody was going to buy vacant land—I will take the simplest form—in London belonging to the London County Council. There are no buildings on it to complicate it. Is anybody going to buy that land on the principle of looking at it, and saying that it ought to be worth so much? He will buy it only on the system that he will look at it and carefully consider what kind of buildings he will put upon it, and what annual return he will get from it. That is a method of arriving at the value which is perfectly contrary to the principle of this Bill. It is perfectly true that the Solicitor-General said last year that the assessors were doing the same sort of thing every day, but he must have said that in the hope that English Members were ignorant of what actually takes place. He said that there were in Glasgow and Edinburgh a great number, probably the majority of the best class of house, which were owned by the occupier, and that, therefore, the assessor has to guess at the rental. No one knows better than the Solicitor-General that there is hardly any one of those districts either in Glasgow or Edinburgh where similar houses in similar positions are not rented. Therefore, the assessor can easily take the actual rents which are paid as the basis for the assessable value where the house belongs to the occupier. The hon. and learned Gentleman gave us another illustration—the valuing of factories and properties of such a nature. I admit that in regard to these the assessor has not the same accurate method of ascertaining the values, but in every case the assessor does take some method. He values the property generally by taking either the return of the property, or the value of the buildings on the ground. These are ascertainable facts, and when it goes to appeal the judge can judge whether these facts have justified the valuation. The Solicitor-General admitted that in these cases the valuations were to a certain extent guess work. Can anyone hold that there is any real justification for altering the whole system of rating in Scotland to bring it out of that condition, which is admitted to be bad, when it is admitted the assessors have no proper method of estimating? It comes to this, that the Solicitor-General's plea is that because the assessors do a certain amount of valuing in an unsatisfactory way without *data*, it is perfectly proper you should throw the whole valuation upon them to be carried out in the same way without any *data* to guide them. There is, in my opinion, far stronger ground against the Bill, and that is its impracticability. I maintain without any hesitation whatever that the system which would be adopted under the Bill would be the most vicious system possible to conceive. The hon. Member for Preston pointed out what the effect of the Bill would be in freeing the rich and imposing burdens upon the poor. He did not exaggerate. The words of the Solicitor-General himself in defending it last year bore out in every respect the charge made by the hon. Member. He said that the object was to enable a man who has a more valuable house to pay a smaller proportion of the rate, and the man who has a less valuable house to pay a larger proportion of it. This is, in other words, a rich man's rating Bill. It is introduced for the express purpose of saving the rich at the expense of the poor. And that is put forward by a Liberal Government. That is not a fancy picture. The hon. Member for Preston gave illustrations of it to which I believe there is no answer, and to which I should like to have the answer if the law officer has one to give. In the West End of Glasgow there are side by side large houses and small villas, and almost cottages. The land and the situation are precisely the same in each case. What is the assessor going to do in valuing these two kinds of houses lying side by side? Is he going to say that the smaller cottager might have had the big house, and that, therefore, he is to be valued at the higher rate? He must say either that, or that the larger house should be valued at the lower rate. He has to do it one way or the other, but obviously the expectation of the Solicitor-General is that this is a Bill which will enable a man with a valuable house to escape assessment. His expectation is that the small house will pay a larger sum, and that the big house will pay a smaller sum. I should like to point out what is sometimes forgotten, that the whole basis on which our local taxation is levied in Scotland is a continuance of the old idea that a man should pay in proportion to his means and substance. I do not say that that idea is carried out properly under the existing system, but that is the object. The idea is that a man's rent will represent more or less his total means. I do not say that that is always right. A man's rent has sometimes to depend on the size of his family, but as a general rule it may be taken as a somewhat fair indication. What is this Bill going to do? This valuation is going to reverse that and say that a man's contribution to the rates shall be in inverse proportion to his means and substance, and that if he can put up a big house he should pay proportionately less, and if only a small house proportionately more. That is the proposal of the Government. There is another point to which I should like specially to draw the attention of the House. Last night there was a discussion on the general system of local rating. There was an evil which I think was pretty generally admitted all over the House, and that was that agriculture paid too large a share of the rates because the rent represented a man's means of earning his livelihood, and he had to pay too much in proportion. Precisely the same evil exists now, in all our cities, and I think it is the greatest evil under our present rating system. The evil in this. A shopkeeper of necessity requires large premises, and he requires them in a good situation, and, therefore, he must pay for his rates a far larger proportion than he would pay if he were rated on his means and substance. What will be the effect of this Bill? Instead of remedying that, it will make it enormously worse.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. URE, Linlithgowshire) indicated dissent.

MR. BONAR LAW: The hon. and learned Gentleman doubts that. I would like to hear the answer. I will give an illustration which every Scotsman will appreciate. In Glasgow, probably the most valuable part of the city for site values is Buchanan Street. It is the best street for shops, and, of course, in that position if the shopkeeper is to sell his goods he requires a great amount of space in order to expose his goods. In the place where the shop is the site value will be greatest. Next to Buchanan Street is Queen Street where the site value is not nearly so large, and in that street there have been erected immense blocks of buildings for the accommodation of merchants. In a single one of these buildings there will be, I should say, forty or fifty firms, every one of which firms makes probably a larger income than the shopkeeper. At present they pay less than they ought to pay in proportion to the shopkeeper, but they pay something in respect of the big buildings on the land. But adopt the principle of the Government and you cut off the rate revenue received from these people, and make it almost nothing, and you throw it on the shopkeeper who cannot escape. I say that the delusion at the bottom of the whole of this idea is what is called the unearned increment. Well, I do not much believe in the unearned increment. I think it is based on a delusion altogether. The assumption seems to be that increase of population in itself adds to the value of land. That is not only not true, but it can be proved to demonstration to be not true. Take the city of Glasgow. There are large parts of that city, where, owing to the change of conditions, the site value is enormously less than it was twenty-five years ago, and everybody who knows anything about the city would say that in that particular part it is going to fall and not rise. We have additional proof of it in statistics. The population in Scotland has increased, and yet the land value in the rural districts, leaving cities out of account, is less than it was forty years ago by 25 or 30 per cent. That shows that population itself does not necessarily raise value. Anyone who chooses to think of it must see that in the nature of the case it must be so. It is not the community of Glasgow which adds so much to the value of property in Glasgow. What adds to the value of property in Glasgow is the community outside. It buys the goods which Glasgow people produce. Glasgow, or any big city, as a matter of fact, really does far more to add to the land values of countries which supply it, for instance, with food, than it does to add to the value of Glasgow itself, and if you want to get at the land value, you ought to make a claim upon Russia or America. Let me illustrate this in a way which I think is sound. I happened to go the other day in a motor to the outskirts of London. I passed the end of the Hampstead tube. I do not know anything about it, but I think it is very probable that land adjoining that tube will rise in value. On what ground can you claim that the increment belongs to the community out there? If it does not belong to the community, it belongs to the owners of the Hampstead Tube. Take the city of Belfast. Again, I do not know anything about the conditions there. It seems to me inevitable that the big shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff must have added greatly to the value of land in Belfast. There was nothing in Belfast which made it specially suitable as a shipbuilding centre. There was neither coal nor iron in the district. The gentlemen who founded the establishment there would probably have been equally successful in any other port. If the value of land in Belfast has risen on that account, it does not belong to the community, but to the men who established the shipbuilding industry. The same thing is true of all the districts where in our own time we have seen land rise in value. The rise in value of land is due to the initiative of the men who have put down works in the particular locality. Suppose that we assume for the sake of argument—I can only assume it for the sake of argument—that the increased value of land is due to the betterment of the community, is not that true of every other commodity as well? Is it not true that everything is due to the presence of the community? [Cries of "Hear, hear!"] That view commends itself to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. I do not understand the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite who seem to think, because they and their friends do not own any land, that, therefore, they can apply Socialism to the land without any danger to themselves. That is a kind of socialism with which I do not agree, and which I am sure sooner or later hon. Gentlemen opposite will regret that they have touched. But hon. Gentlemen below the gangway are not going to stop even with commodities.

If I understand them aright they are going to deal with individuals. Let me take an illustration which will appeal to the hon. and learned Solicitor-General for Scotland. He lives in Herriot Row, Edinburgh. I do not know whether the hon. and learned Gentleman owns his house, but if it belongs to him he is only entitled to the prairie value of the land on which it is built. The remainder belongs to the community, because the community has made the value! Now, instead of looking at the property, look at the man. Does he not owe his position to the presence of the community? Put the best lawyer in the world out on a moor and what is his value? If you are going to give him only prairie value for his property, why should you not also give prairie value for his individuality? Our friends below the gangway mean to apply that principle in one case just as they intend to apply it in another. I must curtail my remarks [OPPOSITION cries of "Go on"] but I think it is nothing less than a scandal that the Government should have limited this debate to so short a time, for there is a great deal more to be said in exposure of the defects of the Bill. In conclusion let me say that hon. Gentlemen opposite who are so strongly in favour of this delusion are all without exception—even the Lord Advocate cannot keep the fiscal question out of his speeches—opposed to a rating system for Imperial purposes. Now one of the chief arguments which these Gentlemen use on platforms in the country, and which I suppose they believe, is that economists are in favour of their view and against us. Of course, if I had the opportunity I could easily show that that is entirely a mistake. But I now ask: "Can they produce any economist of any school who is in favour of this kind of legislation?" The political economy of this Bill is not the political economy of the study or of the University; it is the political economy of the madhouse.

*MR. J. M. HENDERSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said that almost everyone would admit that in the past, at all events, there had been very large unearned increments in the land. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] If hon. Gentlemen questioned his statement he could show to them that one noble duke had made £250,000 out of the London County Council improvements on Aldwych and Kingsway; and as John Stuart Mill said, that accrued to him "while he slept." No one could doubt that similar unearned increments would accrue in lands in the future; the only question was how to obtain a fair share of it for the State. Up to the present time no Government had ever propounded any scheme for taxing unearned increment or the speculative increase in land value. The question was a difficult one, and he did not envy the Lord Advocate when he came, after this Bill had passed, to frame his taxation upon it. During the last five or six years, Bill after Bill had been introduced into this House with the object of placing an arbitrary tax upon land values. There was the private Bill of the hon. Member for the Elland Division, the Bill of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board, introduced in 1893–1894–1895, and the Scottish Bill introduced by the hon. Member for one of the divisions of Edinburgh in 1903; other Scottish Bills in 1904 and 1905, and last of all, the Bill of his hon. friend the Member for Elgin Burghs in 1906, commonly known as the Glasgow Bill. Notwithstanding what the Solicitor-General for Scotland had said, every one of those Bills recognised the principle that feu duties created in the past were outside its scope. In other words every one of those Bills recognised the principle that existing contracts were to be held sacred. In the Bill of 1906 those contracts were brushed aside, notwithstanding the declaration of the Lord Advocate that the Government intended to respect existing contracts. That Bill went before a Select Committee which deliberately set aside the ruling of the Government and brought forward a Report in which they said that existing contracts were not to be respected. He ought to put the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dulwich right on this matter. That hon. Gentleman seemed to infer that the Government had not been outspoken on this matter; that they had some ulterior object which they wished to conceal. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman was right in his application of that purpose to the Prime Minister and other Members of the Government. He was perfectly satisfied that the Lord Advocate had quite clearly and distinctly echoed the words of the former Lord Advocate in 1854, when a similar proposal was made in the same terms almost and with the same meaning as in the Bill of 1906. The Lord Advocate, then, as the Lord Advocate in 1906, declared in behalf of the Liberal Government that they did not intend to tax feu duties, that those contracts must be observed. He did not think, therefore, it was just to suggest that the Prime Minister had any ulterior view. Notwithstanding what had taken place in the House in 1906, the Select Committee made their proposal to disregard all existing contracts. But they went much further than that. They made a proposal which had never before been heard of within those walls, viz., a proposal for a single tax. That was to say, that all the rating should be thrown on land values, and that buildings and improvements should be left scot-free from rating. That was an idea of some other hon. Members of the House. He had seen a very able article from his hon. friend the Member for West Ham in the *Nineteenth Century*, in which he advocated the same thing, setting forth that what was left to the Liberal Party was to shift the burden of the rates off houses and improvements on to the land. Hon. Gentlemen who took that attitude could not have taken the trouble of perusing the evidence which had been put before the Select Committee on this point. That evidence showed that the whole land value of the land throughout the United Kingdom from John o' Groats to Land's End, including suburban and building land, was not sufficient to meet the rates now collected from the towns, boroughs, and shires of the United Kingdom, even if they took 20s. in the £. Therefore he maintained that the proposal of a single tax was absurd. The Lord Chancellor had said that it was absurd. It was also impossible for the reason that it meant the confiscation of the whole of the land of the country. That being so, he was satisfied that no Legislature in this country would ever adopt the proposal. There was and there ought to be some means of getting at the unearned increment in the future. He took it that the meaning of the declarations of the Lord Advocate and the Prime Minister was that contracts were to be respected, and that the past must go. He would like to follow that point out. They could not trace the money. As a matter of fact 80 per cent. of the unearned increment in the past had gone into the pockets of men who ought to have been taxed, but were not. Therefore, they must let that go; they must not attempt to tax those who had paid full value for their property. But, there was a taxable quantity in the future in unearned increment. The hon. Member for Dulwich had said that no economist would tax unearned increment. But what were the proposals of this Bill? John Stuart Mill said—

> "From the present date or at any subsequent time at which the Legislature may think fit, I see no objection in principle to declaring that the future increment of land value shall be liable to special taxation."

And in the same chapter the hon. Gentleman would find that John Stuart Mill predicted for that purpose a valuation of the land. He believed that that was a form of taxation which the Government would ultimately adopt. As to the details of it and how it was to be worked out that was neither the time nor the occasion to speak; but of one thing he felt convinced, and that was that the imposition must be in the nature of a tax for the State and not for the rating authority or for the municipality. He would tell the House why. The municipalities and the rating authorities had already received a share of all the unearned increment. Let them take a case where a piece of land had been rated at its agricultural value at £3 or so an acre and rates had been paid upon that, say, of 4s. or 6s. an acre. The moment it was converted into a building site worth £100 an acre it immediately jumped up from £3 rating to £100 rating, that was from 12s. or 18s. to £20 or £30 actually received. He would give another case. A property in the City of London which cost £5,000 to build fifty years ago; the rating then was on £250; to-day the rating of that building was £1,000, and all these years the municipality had been receiving their yearly or rather their quinquennial increase on a value which had been raised from rates (say at 6s. 8d. in the £) say £83 to £333. In Scotland the same thing applied in regard to land converted from agricultural into building land. The local authority, without spending a single shilling on roads, which the owner made, had stepped straight away into the improvement, and he said that the municipality was not entitled to anything more. But the State was entitled to something more, because it was by the State more than by the municipality that the owner had been enabled to reap the increment. Whatever the outcome of that argument might be he did not propose to oppose this Bill. He thought the Bill would do good in the direction in which he proposed taxation. It was not ideal in that respect but he hoped that might be remedied and he would like to put down one or two Amendments. But the Lord Advocate was one of those strong men whom it was mighty difficult to convince. The Bill would do two good things. In the first place it would explode many of the fallacies and nebulous theories which were preached from the platforms of the League for the Taxation of Land Values. It would show that there was not the great El Dorado which some hon. Members thought there would be, although there would be a substantial sum for the benefit of the State. And most important of all it would force the public to give their thoughts to this subject, it would bring them into close contact with the matter; it would compel them to realise the truth about the case and bring them down from the clouds to the solid facts which were the only sure foundation upon which they could build any sound legislation.

*MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said he was by no means surprised that the Government had put down a very short sitting for the discussion of this Bill. The real truth of the matter was, that the authors of this Bill knew perfectly well that since it last appeared in the House the bottom had been knocked out of it during the autumn campaign in Scotland. The Solicitor-General, though his more recent speeches had been modelled on his previous ones, evinced a very chastened spirit, and to a large extent gave away many portions of the case which they were accustomed to hear stated by him with great ability in this House during the debates of last year. The Lord Advocate in his speech followed the course which he had taken last year in belittling the measure. He began by saying that it meant "Only a column and nothing more," and continued to chant that refrain, but he did not explain what were the figures which were to go into that column and how exceedingly difficult it was to know how they were to be arrived at. They had heard a great deal about Lord Balfour of Burleigh's report, and he thought the noble Lord had been badly treated by the supporters of this Bill in the way in which his proposals had been used to bolster up their contentions. Lord Balfour of Burleigh had carefully safeguarded himself in making those proposals which were only part of a larger scheme and which dealt with sites as they stood, when he recommended that there ought to be a separate valuation of sites of covered land. But what the Lord-Advocate proposed was that there should be a hypothetical valuation of a cleared site for purposes other than those for which it was at present used; while Lord Balfour of Burleigh dealt with a totally different principle, and the Lord-Advocate had no right to claim him as supporting proposals of this sort. Lord Balfour of Burleigh had repudiated this suggestion in the most specific terms when the Prime Minister claimed him as a supporter of this Bill, and the Lord-Advocate was doing that which he had no business and no right to do, and what he knew he had no right to do when he also did so. The campaign in regard to this Bill had been carried on during the winter months by the Solicitor-General with a spirit which had been extremely admirable, but in a manner which was very monotonous; at all events, it had been monotonous to those who had to follow him and deal with his arguments. They had not heard in the course of the debate what was the ultimate use which the Government proposed to make of this valuation. In the debate last year the Solicitor-General for Scotland said distinctly that it was proposed to utilise this value or unimproved value as a new basis of rating, and to transfer the rating from the existing composite rental to the site value alone. He had recently had occasion to point out in a small country town that the effect of such a proposal would be to relieve wealthy manufacturers there at the expense of the poorer section of the community. There was such a flutter in the Radical dovecots as had never been seen before. He believed that the hon. Member for Clackmannan and Kinross had bitterly complained that the Solicitor-General and himself had made a cockpit of his constituency. But he knew the town, and it was a very natural cockpit for him to select, and when he pointed out that two very important manufacturing firms which at present paid a very large proportion of the rates would largely save on their rating owing to the fact that their buildings occupied sites of very little value, with no railway accommodation or anything to add to them, and that the burden would have to be borne by the poorer classes of the people who were less able to bear it, it was resolved that the Solicitor-General should come to the town to put him right. The Solicitor-General came and spoke as usual an hour and forty minutes. [Laughter.] Well, he said it was impossible to speak on this question in less than that time with any possibility of exhausting it. He could not do it, and he was sure the hon. Gentleman was good for another twenty minutes if need be. How did the hon. Gentleman answer him. The Solicitor-General's political friends expected him, so their local newspaper said, before his speech, to support its honest assertion that no sane statesman would ever propose or suggest that the local rating should be placed on site valuation alone. That was what he (Mr. Younger) had stated, the Solicitor-General had declared in his Second Reading speech last session, was the intention of the Government. Did the Solicitor-General tell the people that he was correct. He could not do that because then there would have been no votes left in that town for the hon. Member for Clackmannan and Kinross. What the hon. Gentleman said was that he had made a mistake in his valuation, and as his speech was difficult to answer, the Solicitor-General thought it safer to embark upon a discussion as to local valuation, of which he knew as much as he (Mr. Younger) did of the moon, put both his feet into a hole in doing it, and made an easy job for him to demolish his arguments ten days later. The net result was, that whatever the effect of this system might be in Glasgow or Edinburgh, it was totally inapplicable to small country towns in Scotland, where the manufacturers only occupied a small piece of land and where the cottagers and ordinary feuars occupied the greater proportion of it. The whole scheme was Utopian and impracticable The Lord-Advocate had expressed surprise that agriculturists were against this Bill. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman that if the actual valuation of the land, void of all the improvements, were taken, the result would be that in his part of Scotland the farmers would pay no rates at all. There would be no basis on which to rate. Was it to be supposed for a moment that a farmer was to be allowed to use the roads and receive all the advantages of county administration and to pay nothing because his farm had no land value. The proposal was ludicrous. In the case of a farm to which he had drawn attention in the previous year the cost of the visible improvements and drainage, and so forth, was £625 more than the whole saleable value of the farm. What would be the value of that land with those improvements taken away. Having dealt with the rural aspect he would deal with the case of the Solicitor-General in adapting this principle to the towns. Surely the annual value of town property was a better criterion of a man's ability to pay for the advantages obtained from the rates than the site upon which the property was erected. The ability of a man to build upon and develop his site was a far better criterion of his ability to pay than the mere possession of the site. Similarly, if the advantages which they obtained were measured by the co-operative services rendered to them out of the rates, surely the size of the house in which a man lived and the number of people who lived in it formed a better criterion of that man's ability to pay than the mere site value. A man with a large house required more water and more police protection. He obtained every thing in larger proportion. Then why should he not pay a larger proportion. This was an extremely dangerous proposal. It was dangerous politically, and the hon. Member for Preston in solemn sentences warned hon. Gentlemen opposite of the risks they were running in bringing it into the political arena and supporting a Bill designed to relieve the rich at the expense of the poor. He regarded it as dangerous for quite another reason. The Government supporters tickled the electors with all sorts of prophesies and had told them that this Bill would settle the housing question, provide for the unemployed, defeat Tariff Reform, and in fact do everything, and the electors of Scotland knew so little about it that many of them believed these things. The Bill, they asserted was going to be an El Dorado and bring enormous revenue from some source or other. He would do the Solicitor-General the justice to say that he had never said it would add to the revenue. At one time the hon. and learned Gentleman thought he had found in it an El Dorado. When he brought in the Report of the Select Committee and proposed to tax existing feu duties, he thought he saw rivers of golden sand. But those rivers have run out and he no longer believed there was added revenue in this proposal. But what this proposal did was to give the unfair politician an opportunity of making out a case which he knew was not fair but which attracted the electors until it was shown that the poorer people would have to pay, and then they came out in their thousands, as they did recently in one town he could mention, and condemned it, and would have nothing to do with it. He himself would like to see this question out of the way with a view to the next general election for the reasons he had given. He would like to see some typical valuation made in Scotland so that the bottom might be entirely knocked out of this scheme. He would conclude by saying that he objected to and protested against an unfair burden being placed on the whole of Scotland in order that this result might be obtained; a result which would be impracticable and useless for any purpose and which would never be the basis of local taxation in that country.

MR. URE said that the hon. Member for Ayr Burghs had done him a great honour. He had made three speeches on this subject, one in his own constituency, one in Glasgow, and one in Edinburgh, but he emphatically denied that in any of those speeches he had hinted that the Government supported the view that feu duty owners should be included in the ranks of the ratepayers. He, in those speeches, explained the reasons upon which the Select Committee arrived at its conclusions, but by no word did he suggest that the Lord Advocate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or the Prime Minister had changed the views they had clearly expressed. The hon. Member for Dulwich had attributed to his speeches a depression in the building trade, and said that immediately the Prime Minister made his declaration feu duties reverted to their original level; but if they did, what right had the hon. Gentleman to attribute that to the action of the Government?

MR. BONAR LAW said as he had been challenged he would say the right was this. Seeing how long the right hon. Gentleman was in making up his mind, people were led to suppose he had changed his views.

MR. URE said the Prime Minister had expressed his views distinctly, and there was no ground for assuming from anything in his speeches that his right hon. friend had changed his views. In those speeches he explained how the Select Committee arrived at its findings, and in doing so hoped he did not do wrong. He seemed to remember a Secretary to the Board of Trade who advocated a duty on manufactured imports. Would he, if there had been a fall in those manufactures, say it was due to the action of his Government?

MR. BONAR LAW said there was this great distinction. The Prime Minister in the Government of which he was a junior Member distinctly stated that no change would be made during the existing Parliament.

MR. URE said the present Prime Minister also did so, and no one except the hon. Member for Dulwich had ever extracted from his (Mr. Ure's) speeches any hint or suggestion that the Government had adopted a policy which distinguished members of the Government had distinctly repudiated at an earlier stage. They had never changed their minds on the subject. Did any hon. Member suggest that he, as Chairman of a Select Committee on a private Member's Bill, was doing anything wrong when he refused to communicate with any of his colleagues in the Government when considering the Report? He would have considered himself disloyal to his colleagues if he had taken such directions. They had come to their own conclusions. The case for the Bill was this. It was introduced not only for the purpose which the Lord Advocate had stated, but further as an essential preliminary to a change in the system of rating. It was obvious that a new system of rating must be set up before they could consider the application of the standard. There were obviously two applications. They might abandon the present standard of rating altogether and substitute for it a rate upon the land value alone, or they might propose a new and additional rate upon the owners of site values—a rate limited in amount, definite in its incidence and definite in the purposes to which it was to be applied. It was wise that the standard should first be erected, seen and considered before they proceeded to consider its application. It would be barely possible to consider its application until the standard was actually erected. That was the view which the Select Committee and the Government held. The justification for a rate upon the value of land apart from buildings and improvements was this. The land derived its value from the activity, enterprise, and expenditure of the community and not of the individual owner of the land, and accordingly there was an immediate, direct, and palpable relation between the value of the land and the prosperity and expenditure of the community. Obviously, therefore, by far the best method of estimating the amount which the ratepayer should contribute to the rates was by taking the value of the land as the basis. Here was a standard which rose and fell in sensitive response to the prosperity and expenditure of the community. Structure and site were essentially different both in origin and in character. Structure was perishable and needed renewal and repair. Site was permanent and usually increased rather than diminished in value. Accordingly a rating standard which combined these two elements was *prima facie*, at all events, an unwise and unfair standard. What advantage could be gained by adopting this new standard of rating in place of the present standard? There were two advantages, the first direct and the second indirect. The direct advantage was a more equitable, fairer, and juster redistribution of the burden of rating. The advantage was displayed in threefold fashion. In the first place, some persons in the community who at present offered no contribution to the rates would be invited to join the ranks of the ratepayers. They were the owners of vacant land suitable for building and not actually built upon, and their contribution to the rates proportionately essened the contribution of the other ratepayers. The second result was that owners and occupiers of land who at present offered a contribution to the rate would be asked to offer an additional contribution. They were owners and occupiers of land which was not fully availed of, and upon which there stood antiquated unsuitable buildings that had fallen into dilapidation and decay. The site was valuable, but the owner had misused it, and, accordingly, they would be invited to make an additional contribution to the rates owing to the advantages which their land had derived from the expenditure and energy of their fellow-citizens. The third result would be that other owners and occupiers of land which was fully availed of and on which eminently suitable buildings, or buildings superior to the site, at present existed would be asked to offer a smaller contribution to the rates on account of the increased contribution of the first and second classes. The indirect result would be that industrial enterprise would be relieved of its burdens and building would be encouraged.

MR. BONAR LAW: Prove it.

MR. URE said it would be proved if they were allowed to set up the new standard. They would cheapen building land by bringing more into the market, and they would relieve the building industry of the hampering restrictions under which it at present lay, because whenever business plant was increased or machinery fixed or something was done to buildings up went the rates. They blotted out altogether buildings and improvements as the standard of rating, and took not the fruit of men's labour, but simply the land. Men were willing to spend their money and material in the way of building when they knew that every additional improvement they made would not add to their rate. Accordingly if that indirect advantage followed they would have done something to relieve overcrowding in great centres by bringing more land into the market, and owners of land in the market competing against one another would bring down the value of building land, with the result that they would have more, better, and cheaper houses, and a great step would be taken towards the solution of the housing problem. That was a very brief outline of the case for the Bill as an essential preliminary to a new standard of rating. The objections urged against the Bill naturally fell into two parts. The first related to the Bill now before the House, and the second to the Rating Bill. He did not dispute the relevancy of the objection, because it was quite obvious that if the second step was unwise and imprudent they ought not to take the first step, and if they challenged the principle of rating successfully one of the main reasons for the Bill would disappear. There were three objections urged. The first was that they could not make the valuation. His answer to that was that it had been done. For twenty years back in seven of the counties of Scotland the rent and the consequent rate had been fixed upon the valuation of the land alone apart from the buildings and improvements upon the land. In all these counties where the custom was for the tenant to erect buildings and make improvements there was no rent charged upon them, and there was a valuation every year of land alone apart from buildings and improvements, upon which rent and rates were fixed. With regard to urban districts, his answer was that for upwards of half a century it had been the regular practice in Scotland to make the valuation of land and buildings separately. Did hon. Members say there was any difficulty in valuing land which was at the present moment covered with buildings? Under this Bill the valuers would certainly require to imagine the buildings cleared away from the site—not a very large draft on the imagination—and then to say what price a willing buyer would give to a willing seller for the site without the buildings. But that was already frequently done by valuers in Scotland under certain Acts of Parliament, the site being valued apart from the buildings. It had been done for the last twenty years in rural districts and for upwards of half a century in the urban districts. The second objection was that if this were done the result would be capricious, arbitrary, and conjectural. If that meant that the valuation would be a matter of opinion, he assented, and replied that every valuation was a matter of opinion and reasonable expectation. It was not to the purpose to say that if they found the actual rental they ought to accept it as the basis of valuation. Yes, if it were an honest rental, and if there were no other consideration than the rent in the lease. But, then, in the vast majority of cases in Scotland such property was not let at all; it was in the occupation of the owner, and yet every year, at present, the value was put on the valuation roll as the opinion or conjecture of the valuer or assessor. The third objection was that the expense and the trouble would be excessive and unreasonable. That, again, was entirely a matter of opinion and guess. The most eminent and experienced valuers who were examined on this point declared that it was easy of accomplishment, easier, indeed, than valuation under the existing system. No one could estimate the expense entailed. The hon. Member for Dulwich was wrong when he said that the Statute of 1854 was not intended to alter the basis of rating. It was so intended, because that Statute was based upon a valuation taken in the time of Oliver Cromwell, whereas from 1854 onward a new valuation was substituted. As a matter of fact a far greater change was made by the Statute of 1854 than that of substituting rating on land for rating on land and buildings. At any rate, if a thing were worth doing, the trouble and expense of it ought not to stand in the way. The Select Committee, following the conclusion arrived at by the minority headed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, concluded that a valuation could be made without any undue expenditure of either time or money. That brought him to the objections to the new system of rating. The first objection urged by hon. Members opposite was that it would mean confiscation and dishonesty. Surely it would only mean that if the rate-collector every year actually carried off a portion of the thing which was rated. But it was not things that were rated, but persons. Accordingly, when they spoke of rating a thing they only meant that they used the thing as a standard or measure by which they fixed the amount that the owner of it should contribute to the rate. If to rate the value of the land would be to confiscate the land, then to rate the value of the land and the buildings would be to confiscate the land and buildings, and that being so, they had been confiscating land and buildings for years without anyone complaining. ["Hear hear."] It was exactly the same fallacy under which those laboured who said or thought they had discovered here some hitherto unsuspected source of wealth, from which, if they put a conduit pipe into it—to use the picturesque figure of the Leader of the Opposition in his recent speech in Scotland—a fertilising flow would issue forth over the whole urban and rural area of the country. No such unattached source of rating existed. There was no source from which rates could be derived except their own pockets or the pockets of their neighbours. [OPPOSITION cries of "Especially your neighbours."] The second objection, urged by the hon. Member for Preston, was that the effect of this new system of rating would be to place an unduly heavy burden on poor people living near the centre of large populous places, and consequently to lighten the rates of wealthy men occupying mansion-houses in the vicinity. As he listened to the hon. Member advancing this argument, he thought he was denouncing the present system. The exact effect of the present system was that the small shopkeeper was heavily rated in proportion to the man who lived in a mansion, whereas the new system, by bringing more land into the market, and thereby pulling down values near the centre, would remove that grievance. They did not value the grounds and site upon which a mansion rested at the same figure at which they valued agricultural land from the obvious reason that its value in the market was higher. Therefore the immediate effect of adopting this new standard would rectify the very thing which the hon. Member for Preston complained of, for it would compel the owner of mansion-houses to pay a larger contribution to the rates. The last objection was that the value of land in a particular community did not always or necessarily depend on the expenditure, energy, and enterprise of that community. According to the hon. Member for Dulwich, the energy, enterprise, and expenditure of the countries with which that community traded must also be taken into account. If that theory were well founded there were streets in Glasgow which derived their value from foreign countries. They would have to carry their discrimination further than from one community to another. They would have to find out in what particular street or building a man carried on his business. George Square and Ingram Street, it might be argued, derived their value from "Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strands." The fallacy was that they took the essential for the accidental, and the accidental for the essential.

And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question.

The House divided :—Ayes, 363 ; Noes, 99. (Division List No. 14.)

AYES.

Abraham,William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen,A. Acland(Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith,Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker,Joseph A(Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey(Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry,Redmond J(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beacuhamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn,Sir J Williams(Devonp'rt
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner,J.F.L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clarke, C. Goddard (Peckham)
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J.(SPancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett,CH(Sussex,E Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J.(Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar,SirJ.A.(Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir JohnP.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats,Sir T.(Renfrew,W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, CecilB.(Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson,Arthur(Durham)
Henderson,J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hohkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W.Bateman(Somerset,N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jcakson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones,SirD Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King,Alfred John(Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G.(Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H.(Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil(St.Pancras, E.
Leese,Sir JosephF.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A Levy(Essex,Harwich)
Lever,W.H.(Cheshire,Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah(Down,S.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John

M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Ghiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'ConnorJames(Wicklow,W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk,Eye
Philipps,Col.Ivor(S'thampton)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E.(Edinburgh,Central)
Price,Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M
Redmond, John E.(Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E(Dundee)
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel,Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann,SirC.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph (Chesh.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James ((Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomas,Sir A.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thorne, William
Tillett, Louis John
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whiteley, John Henry (Halifax
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson,J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J. (City Lond
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cavendish,Rt.Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Collings,Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingham
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis (Antrim,S.
Craig,Captain James (Down, E.
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George G.
Hamilton, Marquess of

Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Neild, Herbert
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Soares, Ernest J.
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Harold Cox and Mr. Everett.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February, to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.

POLITICAL FUNDS.

*MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.), in rising to propose "That this House regrets the secrecy under which political funds are accumulated and administered, and regards such secrey as a peril to its privileges and character," said: In moving the Motion which stands in my name I particularly desire to emphasise the precise terms in which it is drawn; for it is one whose purpose might be easily misunderstood, and it is one which, were it misunderstood, might give an offence or pain which I, and those who support me in this matter, particularly desire to avoid giving. I do not propose for the consideration of the House the evils that may or may not arise from the existence of great political funds in the hands of political parties. What I propose for its consideration is the secrecy under which those funds are accumulated and disbursed. That secrecy, and that secrecy alone, has furnished me with the motive for my Motion and is the cardinal point which I desire to emphasise. That great funds should be accumulated for the purpose of supporting candidates in any public interest is not an evil nor even a disadvantage. It is, under modern conditions, a necessity, and the more democratic those conditions become the more necessary will it be in some form or other that such funds should exist. The expenses of travel incidental to an election, the expenses in the printing and distribution of argument upon either side, are not diminishing, they are increasing, and if no such funds were present to support any particular cause, that cause could only be represented in this House by wealthy men. It is not the existence of such reserve funds with which we quarrel. It is merely the secrecy under which in comparatively recent times and by a political development not due to individuals—a mechanical, and, as it were, unconscious development—that secrecy has come to exist. Well, then, what are the evils attaching to this element of secrecy, and how does it, in the words of the Motion, form "a peril to the character and privileges of this House"? I believe, and I hope to lead the House to believe, that that secrecy is a peril. A peril, I say, and no more. Had it existed for a longer period; had this method of secret accumulation and secret distribution become part and parcel of our political life; had it existed for two generations, then it would be not a peril but an evil, existing in fact. I merely say, therefore, that it is a peril, but an imminent peril. The first point for the House to consider is whether the secrecy of the accumulation is a peril to the privileges and character of this House; how far is it a peril to the honour of the country, and how far it affects our political morality, whether it is or is not an advantage that it should have led to certain practices with regard to public honours, I am not concerned with at present, but I am asking, how far is that secrecy a peril to the privileges and character of this House? Well, that accumulation, effected as it is, secretly, is a twofold peril. It is a peril to the representative character of the House of Commons, because the mass of the electorate is, to some extent, baulked of its freedom by the secrecy. The constituencies are unable to judge by what influences and from what motives the choice of a candidate may be determined. Those influences and motives are concealed from the mass of the electorate, and this gives too great weight to a few men who are, to use a vulgar phrase, "in the know." It gives a great weight to the few men who are large subscribers in the district, and it does not give sufficient weight to those from whom the authority of this House proceeds—that is, the electors of England. That is the first part of the peril which the secret accumulation of these funds causes. I will go further than this; I will go so far as to say that until the issue was raised upon a recent occasion both in this House and in the public Press, the great mass of the electorate had not so much as heard of the existence of these party funds. It is quite impossible that under such conditions true representation should be obtained. In the second place, it is inevitable that so long as these great sums of money remain unaudited, the full initiative that should lie with the electorate first, next with the House of Commons, and lastly with the Government of the day as the spokesman of the majority, is affected. I may be told that this initiative would be equally affected and the representative character of the House equally marred were the funds in question publicly contributed and dispensed. No one can maintain that who knows anything of men. It is an essential convention of our politics in this country to pretend that large contributions do not affect the initiative of the Government, but I cannot accept that convention. I cannot believe that the payment of considerable sums of money in secret is made with no expectation of any return, and, even among the best of men, with no expectation of consequent authority. That wealth will always have its influence is true. But wealth when it acts publicly cannot dare to do what it will often dare to do when it acts in a secret manner. A man will bring influences to bear privately in favour of policies which he would never dare publicly to defend. The very names of certain contributors would be a warning to the public, just as the names of others would guarantee the independence with which the funds were used. As for that argument, so common in our political life, that no such pressure is ever exercised for private objects, the answer is simple enough: First, that such purity, did it exist, would be a phenomenon unique in history—and we are not accustomed to producing unique phenomena; it is incredible that such pressure should be absent. Secondly, that the only possible motive for secrecy is the opportunity it affords for exercising that pressure. I will put a hypothetical case. I will suppose a man attempting to extend what has already unfortunately begun, the system of monopolies in matters of ordinary consumption. I will suppose a crisis during which legislative and even administrative action promptly used would prevent the formation of such a monopoly. Can anyone pretend that if this man had given largely to the secret funds those who benefited by this gift would remain indifferent? Or can anyone pretend that an action of this kind could take place where all was public and above-board? There is an example of something which has already come very close to us, and which in the near future will be a permanent and dangerous menace to the economic health of this country. Or to take another case. Let us suppose a man to subscribe so largely to the funds of any one Party that his withdrawal would seriously affect its strength in an electoral campaign. The man may, for the best of public reasons, differ on some essential point with the overwhelming majority of his own Party. If his action is secret, affecting but a small knot of men with whom he is in personal contact, and who are familiar with the danger his secession would present, may it not of itself dwarf or reduce to impotence the whole policy of the group to which he belongs? Here is no case of corruption, but is it not a case in which the power of wealth is quite unduly exaggerated, and in which the opinions of one man are permitted to exercise upon public affairs a determining effect which they would never have had if his talents or public position alone were considered, and which they possess solely on account of his wealth? And is not secrecy a cause of that very individual preponderance? The secrecy of the distribution of these funds is less dangerous and more excusable than the secrecy of their accumulation. It is clear that a motive of delicacy and of good feeling prompted those who were responsible at the origin of the system to keep private sums that had been given in aid of expenses to individuals. But even this side of the matter has its perils. There is the danger of extending the class of men to whom such advantages are afforded. The boundaries are difficult to draw between a man who can afford nothing, a little, the greater part, or the whole of the expenses of an election, and unless there be publicity there is every danger that within a certain space of time the bulk of a political party will have acquired the custom of obtaining such support. There is another and a much greater danger on which I desire to speak with the fullest recognition that it is a danger only, not a present evil. I mean the danger that pressure may be put upon individuals in particular cases; and here I must publicly state that I believe such pressure to be exceedingly rare. The House will remember that some months ago a question of privilege was raised upon that matter. It was raised by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone, and the House divided upon it and came to some valuable decision which I do not remember. I think that in this matter, as it is of such gravity, as it touches the honour of so many men, though it is a personal matter, it is right that I should make one explanation that will give my argument, I hope, a greater value. I will draw a lesson from my own example. I personally am convinced that pressure of that kind if it has been brought to bear at all, has been brought to bear so slightly as not to affect as yet the working of our political system. I know that from my own case. It was from the Party funds that my expenses were paid. It was my duty as a Catholic, speaking for the Catholics of Lancashire, to vote with independence upon the Education Bill, and I have adopted an independent attitude on other occasions. On every occasion I have been absolutely free from pressure of any kind. Having made that clear statement to the House, hon. Members will agree with me that I am discussing this question in an impersonal manner. As I have said, public pressure has not, so far as I know existed. If others say it has existed, it is for them to bring it forward. I do not deny it. If it has, I do not think it has affected our political life, and in my case it has not existed at all. But is there another form of pressure that could be brought to bear? Yes. It is possible for an unscrupulous man of great wealth to approach a scrupulous man of no wealth, and to hint to him that he is a great subscriber to the Party fund, and that the scrupulous man is expected in matters more or less neutral, or even commercial to take a certain course. My suggestion is not a chimerical one—we have come exceedingly close to it in the life of the present Parliament—and it is an extreme danger for the future. The man I picture has done a particularly wicked act, but it is impossible to pay out money secretly without there being some sense of value to be received, and it is impossible to take money secretly without some sense of dependency. Such pressure can be brought, and there is a danger that it may be brought, and we want to avoid it. Those who think they can defend this system may say: "What would you substitute for it?" My object to-night is merely negative. It is merely to ventilate the question and see what the opinion of the House is upon it. I am not proposing a positive remedy, though personally I would suggest a system such as that which obtains in the case of all other economic machinery, namely, that an audit should take place. It is generally admitted that if the secrecy with which these great public funds were replaced by publicity, less money would be required. I think it would myself. I think the Corn Law League, for instance, or any other of those great leagues for reform, had been secret in its character, they would have had more money at their disposal, but they would have done less. And if this accumulation of small sums lead, as it undoubtedly would, to certain necessary and immediate reforms, such as second ballot, such as the payment by the State of all strictly legal election expenses, it would be welcome. But it certainly ought not to stand in the way of an immediate and necessary political reform. I have admitted these evils are slight, but will they remain slight? We cannot go to our constituents and say they are slight at the moment, because the whole matter is in the dark; if anybody says one is expected to vote for a certain policy, because to their knowledge Mr. So-and-so has subscribed largely to the party funds what can one reply? I have myself been asked such questions as this: "Is it not the fact that the Government (not the present Government or the past Government, but any Government) have been moved by certain subscriptions?" and I had to answer: "I do not know." But that doubt exists in the public mind. I must close my remarks—I have spoken too long—by begging the House to remember that the projection of this Motion is not frivolous. We do not desire to move a Motion that might excite a momentary interest. Still less do we desire to move one of which the interest would be purely personal or touched with scandal, and that note of amusement which comes to us when discussing the misfortunes and follies of others. I move this Motion because this is the beginning of a system which, in the near future, so rapidly changing is our system, may become the method of discipline of both political parties. We want to prevent that. We want it to become impossible in the near future that the discipline of any Party should be only made effective by a payment in secret to a fund, and a payment in secret out of that fund to a private individual. With that I conclude. I beg to move.

*MR. EDMUND LAMB (Herefordshire, Leominster): In seconding this Motion, I only wish to emphasise a few of the points which were dealt with so ably by my hon. friend. The first one I wish to emphasise is that this is a non-party Motion. It is not an attack upon this Government or indeed any particular Government. It is an attack upon a custom which we cannot permit. I appeal to all quarters of the House for support for this Motion because it is in the hope of furthering the purity of our Parliamentary system that it is moved. The second point I desire to emphasise is the secrecy of the system. We have no objection to open payments. Personally, I wish all Members of Parliament were paid and paid openly, and all the expenses of Returning officers were paid, and canvassing by paid canvassers prohibited. When it comes to posters I wish they were prohibited, and that any interference in any election by any league, whether it is the Tariff Reform League or any other, were prohibited. As a matter of curiosity, too, I would like the hon. Baronet the Member for the Wellington Division of Somerset, whom I see in his place, to tell the House what is the difference between tariff reform funds and the funds of the Conservative Party. We do not object to open payments or to honours given purely for services rendered, but we certainly quarrel with honours conferred for a secret money payment and no service at all. I do not know whether there are secret funds belonging to the Liberal Party, because I have subscribed to none and have not received a farthing from any. But the fact remains that strange people, whom nobody knows anything about, go up to another place and the matter is forgotten as quickly as possible. I think these secret payments are more injurious to the donor than to the recipients; still if we are to have a hereditary Second Chamber I would prefer that that Chamber should not be composed of the descendants of men who purchased their honours. The only honours that a Member of this House wants are the love of the people whom he has served during his life and their reverence after his death.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House regrets the secrecy under which political funds are accumulated and administered, and regards such secrecy as a peril to its privileges and character."—(*Mr. Belloc.*)

*MR. LEA (St. Pancras, E.) said that, in taking part in the debate, he desired to preface his remarks with a word or two of thanks to the hon. Member for Salford for having brought the matter forward. With regard to the hon. Member who had just seconded the Motion, he must say that he differed from him when he said that this was not an attack upon the present or the previous Government. He thought it was most essentially so, and it was with a view of proving that it was so that he intended to try and elaborate his case. He thought it would be conceded that it would not be out of place on his part to try and carry the House back to 15th July last and briefly review what took place on that occasion. It would be well within everybody's memory that on that date he was brought before the House for a breach of privilege at the instigation of the noble Lord opposite on account of a letter he had written to *The Times* a few days previously. That letter contained two definite charges. The first was that titles and decorations in this country of all sorts were—it was a matter of everyday occurrence—bought and sold. The second was that the proceeds of the sale of those titles and decorations went to fill the party war chests. Those war chests were kept by two men only. In the case of the Party in power the two men were, first of all, the Prime Minister, and then the Patronage Secretary. In the case of the Party in opposition, the war chest was kept by the Leader of the Opposition and by the Chief Opposition Whip. He further said in that letter that in the case of necessitous candidates grants-in-aid were given, and that later, when those candidates became Members of that House, pressure was brought to bear upon them by their respective Whips to ensure that their votes and speeches were of such a nature as to satisfy the exigencies of the parties to which they belonged. In the debate which took place on the Motion of the noble Lord, only the second part of the letter was dealt with. The first part was ignored altogether; but he was bound to say it was not left out of the division which took place on his conduct. The House took the same serious view of the allegations contained in his letter as he did himself. The noble Lord not only moved that he (Mr. Lea) had committed a breach of privilege, but he asked the House to institute a Committee of Inquiry into the various charges which he (Mr. Lea) had made and to report thereon. Had that Committee been appointed its task must necessarily have been to investigate all the allegations in the letter which he wrote to *The Times*. He regretted that it was not appointed. Immediately afterwards he put down on the Notice Paper a Motion to this effect—

> "That a Select Committee of twenty-one Members of this House be appointed to inquire and report to this House whether during the last four years the Prime Minister in office has recommended to His Majesty for elevation to the Peerage, Baronetage, Knighthood or Privy Council, any person or persons who have made any money payments either to party funds or any other person or persons in respect of such recommendation, and further to inquire and report whether the Prime Minister in office at the time was responsible for any such recommendation under such circumstances, and, if not, who was responsible; and that the said Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records."

Had that Committee been appointed with power to compel the presence before it of bankers and pass books, he unhesitatingly said that he would have had no difficulty in proving his case up to the hilt. He did not think there was a man who could get up and deny it—either the Chief Opposition Whip or the Patronage Secretary. He had not withdrawn one word of his accusation or retracted it. On the contrary, he reaffirmed now every word that he had previously said. He would go further, and say that it was a matter of common knowledge and gossip in the House, in the clubs, and in the streets, that the titles and decorations in vogue in this country were just as lacking in dignity, prestige, and moral worth as the methods by which they were obtained were loathsome, corrupt, and nauseous. The Prime Minister said in the course of his speech—

> "Let me add, if it is a charge against this Government, it is equally a charge against those responsible for the government of the country in previous years; and it is equally a charge against the parties of Members sitting below the gangway opposite."

With the first part of that quotation he was entirely in agreement. Nay, he would go further and say that the amount of corruption which took place during the Tory *regime*, and for which the Leader of the

Opposition and the Chief Opposition Whip were responsible——

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I understand that the hon. Member is making a direct charge of corruption against these right hon. Gentlemen. If so, he is entirely out of order.

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) pointed out that the Motion regretted the secrecy under which political funds were accumulated and administered and there was a direct charge in the Motion of dishonesty. He submitted, that any hon. Member was entitled to deny the accusation which had never yet been denied, and that his hon. friend was entitled, seeing that the accusation had not been denied, to make the charge and to press it home.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Motion on the Paper is: "That this House regrets the secrecy under which political funds are accumulated and administered, and regards such secrecy as a peril to its privileges and character." That has nothing to do with the making of a direct charge on the honesty of any hon. Member of this House.

MR. MARKHAM: On a point of order, I submit that no attack whatever has been made on the honour either of the Patronage Secretary or of the Chief Opposition Whip.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That surely is a point for me to decide.

*MR. LEA said that he wanted to be clearly understood. What he had said involved no personal charge either against the present Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, neither had it reference to the two Whips. It was the system that he was attacking. It was not their personal honour he was attacking; it was the party funds.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am very glad to hear that explanation: I understood the hon. Member to say that corruption was carried out under the right hon. Gentlemen. That was a particular charge. I understand now that the hon. Member repudiates it. If so, he should withdraw the charge.

*MR. LEA said that he withdrew any reference of a personal nature; but he said that political corruption during the *régime* of the present Leader of the Opposition from 1903 to 1905 had reached such a stage that the tariff for titles and decorations was well-known in the City of London, while the percentage or commission allowed to the introducer of the customer for them was equally well known. He sincerely trusted the House would excuse any heat of words on his part. With regard, however, to the second part of the quotation from the Prime Minister's speech it would be remembered that the hon. Member for the Clitheroe Division quickly got up in his place and repudiated with scorn any similar liability. He pointed out that the party funds belonging to that party were public and were audited. The right hon. Gentleman when he got up knew well besides that the parties presided over by the hon. Member for Waterford and the hon. Member for Barnard Castle had never filled their funds to repletion by corrupting the fountain of honour at its very source. Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition said that it would add neither to the dignity of the House nor to its proceedings to take action. When he read that over afterwards by his own fireside, he thought it was extremely kind of them, until he realised that they were the chief culprits whom he had had accused in his letter to *The Times*. There was another channel as well as that he had indicated to which the proceeds of these sales went, but as that was not germane to the subject now under discussion he would make no further allusion to it, except to say that that also would have to fall within the scope of the suggested inquiry. The evidence that could be extracted in that direction would, he was convinced, be more startling still when he reflected that the market price of peerages reached sometimes as high as £150,000. [Cries of "Oh, oh!"] He knew what he was talking about. Out of curiosity he had examined the file of *The Times* for the last four years ending December, 1907, and he would quote the dates so that Members might check his figures. First of all, there were the lists of 9th November, 1903; 9th November, 1904; 30th June, 1905; 9th November, 1905; and 9th December, 1905. These lists appeared during the *régime* of the last Tory Government, and the Leader of the Opposition was responsible for them. The next two lists were in December, 1905, and January, 1906, when the Liberal Party was apparently preparing for its attack on the House of Lords by adding ten Members to that Assembly. Then they had the lists of 29th January, 1906; 9th November, 1906; 28th January, 1907; and 9th November, 1907. He had omitted all reference to men who had been made members of the Orders of the Bath or the Garter or St. Michael and St. George or any other tom-fool order. He left out the usual baronetcy for the Lord Mayor of London and the two knighthoods to the sheriffs for entertaining foreign potentates at their own expense. From November, 1903, to December, 1905, the Tory Party were responsible for the creation of thirteen Peers, sixteen Privy Councillors, thirty-three Baronets and seventy-six Knights; a total of 128 in two years, of which number thirty-six, or 28·1 per cent., were Members of that House. From December, 1905, to November, 1907, two years of Liberal *regime*, twenty Peers were created, nineteen Privy Councillors, thirty-three Baronets and ninety-five Knights, total 167, of which thirty-seven, or 22·1 per cent., were Members of that House. It would be admitted on all sides to be a most lamentable thing were it recognised inside or outside that Chamber that men went into the House of Commons with any other object than to try to do their duty according to the pledges they gave to their constituents, and yet when one pondered over these figures one could not but think that social advancement was an ulterior motive with many. Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton in a very ably-written newspaper article last year said that rich men paid into the party funds and were made Peers, whilst poor men were paid out of them and made slaves. A terser or better description of the accumulation and administration of the Party funds system could scarcely be given. He did not say that all who entered that House went there with a view to social advancement. That reproach could not be levelled against the Irish and the Labour Parties with any degree of justice or fairness whatever. But however sincere a man might be when he first went there, however radical his views and ideals might be, there seemed to be in the atmosphere of that place a bacillus or germ, long exposure to which had a most deplorable effect. Whether that bacillus was imported by the Commissioner of Works from the Heralds' College in Queen Victoria Street, or not, he did not know. In support of that theory of his he proposed to tell the House a little story which had the merit of being perfectly true. For two years he had sat on a Committee, the chairman of which, in 1906, became a knight. At the next meeting of the Committee he noticed a sort of reflected pride in the faces of all of the Members, as they vied with one another in congratulating the chairman on his recent admission to the ranks of chivalry. But across the rippling stream of harmonious congratulations suddenly came a harsh discord. An hon. Member said—

> "I am very sorry to have to strike a jarring note on this occasion, but you know my views on this kind of thing. I have often refused it myself before. I deem a man who accepts a knighthood rather a subject for pity and commiseration than congratulation."

That summarised his views so much that when it came to his turn he pitied and commiserated with the chairman on the disaster that had overtaken him in the later years of his life. But imagine his surprise when, eight months later, the man who struck the jarring note had himself become a subject for pity and commiseration.

MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): May I ask whether he also was a Liberal Member of the House?

*MR. LEA said he regretted to say that both these men posed as being Radicals. It was not only on that side of the House that some of them looked upon the sale and brokerage of titles and decorations as a disgrace to the House and the country that permitted them. In an article in the *Saturday Review* on 16th

December, 1905, headed "The Adulteration of the Peerage" the editor said—

> "A peerage has just been conferred on Sir Herbert de Stern, who a year or two ago was made a baronet. When we remember that in 1895 Lord Rosebery created Lord Wandsworth, a near relative of Sir Herbert de Stern, we may well ask what are the claims of this family on the public, that within ten years two of its members should be given the right to sit and vote with the hereditary aristocracy of Great Britain. Out of sheer curiosity we want to know what services in court or in camp, in public or in private, have the De Sterns rendered to the British Empire, that two Prime Ministers of opposite Parties in the State should vie with one another in inviting them to take a seat among the aristocracy, the best, bravest and noblest that England can produce. Do Lord Wandsworth and Sir Herbert de Stern answer that description of aristocrats? Obviously not. Then why have they been made peers? The answer is 'money.'"

Then in relation to another peerage the editor went on in a very ably written article, which he (Mr. Lea) advised all hon. Members to read—

> "With equal aversion, though of a somewhat different kind, we regard the peerage conferred on Sir Alfred Harmsworth, the founder and proprietor of *Answers*, *Comic Cuts*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, and a dozen other newspapers. The best way of describing our own feelings is by reporting what we gather to be the feelings of nine men out of ten, the majority of whom were either shocked or amused, according to their temperament, by the news that Sir Alfred Harmsworth was to be made a Peer."

The editor concluded by saying—

> "We cherish the belief that Mr. Balfour is not solely responsible for creations which cannot but lower one of the greatest of our institutions in the eyes of educated men. It is, however, in the power of the new peers to prove our criticism harsh. They may so amend their manners as to become indistinguishable from those amongst whom they have been promoted, and thus show that there is something in the old saying *noblesse oblige*."

If one of the leading Conservative papers could use language of that kind in criticism of peerages which their own Party had created, what must they think and say of that Party which had rightly started a campaign against the House of Lords, and very properly informed their supporters throughout the country that it was a danger to the Constitution and a menace to their liberties, and had yet during the last two years helped to fill its war-chest by making additions to that Chamber? Twenty peerages had been created by this Government during the last two years. He hoped sincerely every additional peerage they made would bring swiftly, Nemesis-like, in its train a by-election result like that in the Colne Valley, which showed what the electors thought of hypocrisy and political inconsistency. It might be asked why he had brought this matter up and what he hoped to get by pursuing it. His answer was a very simple one. When he entered that House he had certain democratic ideas which he still cherished, and he hoped, by bringing before the the House the meanness and absurdity of this traffic in titles and decorations, that the House would be moved to institute an inquiry into it all and put a stop to it. He was not a politician and if to be a politician was to be inconsistent in one's policy, to disregard one's pledges to one's constituents, to obey blindly the behests of Party Whips and finally to leave the House with a title purchased by a big cheque and the sacrifice of one's innermost convictions, then he trusted he might always remain what he was, a very poor representative of his constituency he admitted, but at any rate, he claimed to be an honest one. The only possible excuse for these honours, so-called, was that they were given as a reward for meritorious service, but he frankly confessed he would sweep them away with as little compunction as a sanitary inspector would display in removing an offensive nuisance. ["Oh."] By hawking them, however, in exchange for enormous cheques the Leaders of the two Parties and the Chief Whips were certainly degrading them and dishonouring those who received them for merit alone. His hon. friend was seeking by his Motion at any rate to elevate them to the only logical positon they could possibly occupy, and because of that he sincerely hoped that all hon. Members would support the Motion.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said he had come to the conclusion, after listening carefully to the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down, that in his estimate peers and peerages were, like faith, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." He would have no difficulty, if he so chose, in giving not fewer than 100 peerages whose patents were simply steeped in corruption. He would not do so, however, for there was no use in hurting people's feelings. He was not going to make a personal speech, although the temptation to do so was very great. Where was the brave Leader of the Opposition on this occasion? [AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Where is the Prime Minister?] He appeared to have fought as shy of this as he did of discussing tariff reform in the last Parliament. Upon such matters as these he had a great belief in the intelligence of the House. [Cries of "No."] He did not know whether they could or could not judge the present by the past, but he happened to know something of the way in which peerages in times past had been created. Every time a man was addressed as "My Lord," he must feel very uncomfortable when he reflected how some of the peerages had been got. He thought there would be a great advantage accruing from the publicity of Party funds. By way of illustration he would first of all begin with the Liberal Party. It was well known that the late Mr. Rhodes gave £5,000 to the Liberal funds, and, as was usual, it was not acknowledged. This fact was subsequently brought as a charge against the Liberal Party, and it was alleged that the correspondence on the subject was in existence. If that money had been given openly and above board how could such a suggestion have arisen? The very idea of secrecy in these matters was objectionable, and if people got money why should they not openly acknowledge it? After the lapse of eleven years a gentleman, who was almost as famous a supporter of the Union as Mr. Piggot, came prominently before the public. He referred to Mr. Terah Hooley. He was a pious man, and a friend to the Establishment, and he gave a communion service to St. Paul's Cathedral. His name was on every man's lips, in fact "Hooley, Hooley was the man." Hooley was not forgetful of the Party funds, and he sent his Party a cheque for £30,000. Now what became of that cheque? This was towards the end of the Jubilee celebration. Then came the revelations of 1898. [AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: But they did not cash that cheque.] He was coming to that point. That cheque was sent back with a kind of Joseph-like chastity to Hooley when he was found out, and the result was that Hooley never got the baronetcy which was supposed to be the price of the cheque. Would it be believed that the secret service fund for that year was raised by £30,000, which was exactly the amount of the cheque sent back to Hooley? He thought in this matter he had been perfectly impartial for he had given an instance from both Parties. He thought himself that these honours might very well be sold openly and above board. Were it not that peers were hereditary legislators and had the power of supervising all the legislation of that House, he did not see why anybody should not buy a peerage who was fool enough to do so, provided the price were only regularly paid. But the sale and brokerage of honours was no new thing. The documents were still in existence in which the Lord-Lieutenant of the day founded the Order of the Knights of St. Patrick, whose jewels were now the subject of a mystery. For his part, if he were Chancellor of the Exchequer he would create new honours, and raise revenue by the sale of them. He would re-duplicate the Garter. He would give them Garters on both legs. He would import the honours possessed by the King of Siam, "Brother of the Moon," "Half-brother of the Sun," "Arbiter of the Rise and Fall of the Tides," "Possessor of twenty-four Golden Umbrellas." What a gold mine was here for the Chancellor of the Exchequer! The foundation of all this craze for honours was that men were ashamed to be humble and poor. The saying of John Bright, spoken in the middle of the nineteenth century, that the purest Member of Parliament was Andrew Marvell, who was not ashamed to take wages from his constituency and thereby was able to resist the corrupters, was worth recalling; and that great statesman went on to declare that when men without titles and without property qualifications sat in the House it would then truly become what Edmund Burke said it was—

> "The true reflex, the express image, of the feelings of the nation."

*MR. BUCKMASTER (Cambridge) moved to amend the Resolution by inserting after the word "administered" the following: "Especially the way in which large sums, derived from the secret funds of the Tariff Reform League and other similar societies, are spent in electoral contests without being returned in the candidates' expenses." He said the Amendment was not framed to divert attention from the Resolution moved by his hon. friend, but rather to direct it to some particular, and he thought, important illustrations of what the Resolution sought in general terms to condemn. He thought it was desirable that he should call the attention of the House for a few moments to the provisions of the Act of Parliament whose operation was frequently avoided through the instrumentality of bodies like the Tariff Reform League. By the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883 it was provided that any candidate who made payment to any agent or servant, excepting those expressly mentioned in the statute, was guilty of an illegal act which carried with it, as its consequences, the deprivation of his seat if he was elected, in some cases his disqualification from sitting as a Member of Parliament for seven years, and his punishment with a fine of £100 if the act was brought home to his knowledge. There was no doubt that that statute had done great service in curtailing the most reckless expense that used to be incurred at elections in the olden times. It had been of great service in securing more honest representation than before, but no one who had followed political events closely could fail to see that its whole purpose was avoided, and that its terms were entirely circumvented, by the action which political organisations took on behalf of a candidate, which he was wholly unable to do for himself. The Tariff Reform League was the best illustration which he could find of such an organisation as he referred to, and yet it was difficult to know whether it was right to describe it as a political organisation at all, for to this moment the question whether the Tariff Reform League had swallowed the Party opposite or the Party opposite had swallowed the Tariff Reform League, was a matter of considerable doubt. So also was the question of its construction. It was a strange body composed so far as he could see of free traders who had lost their faith, and Protectionists who had found their opportunity. The original purpose for which it was constructed was professed to be the creation of a scientific tariff.

MR. MARKHAM: Is the hon. Member in order in discussing the question of scientific tariffs on the Amendment now before the House? I beg to call your attention to the Amendment.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Amendment which the hon. Member is moving makes specific reference to the Tariff Reform League. I think, therefore, he is in order in discussing the objects of the league within reasonable limits.

*MR. BUCKMASTER said that if his hon. friend would have a little patience he would find that his observations were strictly in order and strictly relevant to the Amendment. He was going to point out what the original purpose of the league was, and what its actual operations consisted of. So far as he could understand, its original purpose was the creation of a scientific tariff. Hon. Members on that side of the House at least might be pardoned if they found it difficult to know what a scientific tariff might be. He rather gathered that it was meant to be a tariff which would afford satisfaction to the legitimate commercial aspirations of the members of the league, and at the same time, it might be incidentally, avoid ruin to British trade. It was not surprising that the difficulty of constructing such a tariff soon proved too much for the intellectual energies of the League, and they devoted themselves to a more congenial occupation. If there was a Conservative candidate able to lisp their shibboleth and who would subscribe to their fund, he could have the Tariff Reform League at his disposal. No sooner did the electoral contest begin than some shop-front was blazoned with the legends of the league, and pamphlets issued promising cure for all the ills of the body politic by acceptance of the principles of the League. But the matter did not end there. Hired agents beat with impartial foot at every door, and paid canvassers solicited votes nominally on behalf of the league, but in reality on behalf of the candidate. They all knew the process. The paid canvasser went round and asked each elector what his particular trouble might be. Was he suffering because the price of bread was high? Tariff reform would at once cure all that. Was he suffering from the yet harder pinch, a lack of work? Tariff reform would provide him immediately with constant employment. Was he, as a small trader, suffering from acute competition? Tariff reform would instantly remove his difficulties. The only thing that stood in the way of tariff reform—and here he agreed with the canvasser—was the Liberal Party; and as soon as the destruction of the Liberal Party was secured, the way to his blessed and promised relief was open and plain. [OPPOSITION cheers.] It was not often that they had the advantage of having such preposterous doctrines approved of on the floor of the House. It was not often that hon. Members opposite were sufficiently candid to own that the people who were canvassing on their behalf made the price of provisions low or high according to the complexion of the persons from whom he asked their votes, and that all the electors had to do was to secure the return of a Conservative candidate, and all these promised blessings would instantly flow. But the real mischief lay in the fact that if these things had been done by the candidate himself, he would have been declared to have been guilty of illegal practices and his election would have been instantly declared to be void. But, in fact, there was not less illegality when these things were done under the cover and shadow of a body really acting as his agents. Whenever there was a debate in the House on tariff reform, they had a somewhat elusive and etherealised essence of the doctrine with which the late Prime Minister used at once to soothe the impatience of his followers, and to charm the sense of humour in the House. But in the constituencies a very different propaganda was carried on. Pamphlets were distributed, containing promises on one and the same page, that tariff reform would increase employment, raise wages, lower the cost of living, keep out foreign manufactures, and, at the same time, another pamphlet issued and circulated by the same hand asked in these words—

> "Does the working man intend to allow his better self, and his intelligence to be beguiled and befooled by false representations put forth for party purposes by unscrupulous persons simply in the hope of self-aggrandisement?"

He was bound to say that he was amazed [OPPOSITION ironical laughter]—or he might have been amazed—to think that anyone could justify the language of such a document, as that—

> "Put forth for party purposes by unscrupulous persons simply in the hope of self-aggrandisement."

He would have thought that hon. Members opposite would have been anxious to repudiate language of that description, would have been anxious to say that that was not the means by which their elections were influenced, and by which they owed their position in this House. But as he understood they accepted and adopted those tactics, which pointed to the party character of the acts done and were in fact, if not in the letter, violations of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883. Further, they knew that a Licensing Bill would shortly be introduced into the House, and the mere fact that it was going to be introduced, without any knowledge as to what its contents were to be, caused the wealthy brewing interest to become an organised body opposing the Liberal Party. But did anyone suppose that the use of the large funds at the disposal of what was euphemistically called "the trade" was confined to the issue of illustrated pamphlets and pictorial placards depicting clergymen of the Church of England, soldiers, drooping widows and little children gathered together under a banner which bore the inscription: "Beer" expanded into the word "Debenture"? They knew well that no election would be fought from now until the time when they again sought the confidence of the country, at which every public-house would not be made a committee room against them, in which the wealth of the brewers, subscribed in secret, which they could not trace, would be used against them by means which, if used on behalf of the candidate would most certainly be an illegal and in all probability a corrupt practice under the Act of 1883. He knew it would be said that they had similar organisations which might be guilty of a similar offence. It was said that there was an organisation which supported the Liberal Party—the Free Trade Union. But then its subscription list was always open. It was not possible for a man to go down on the eve of an election and make a large subscription to the Free Trade Union and have the fact concealed. And, remember, this concealment was of the utmost importance in the consideration of the case. If they found on the eve of an election a man made a payment to the funds of such a body as the Tariff Reform League, and then immediately after that the Tariff Reform League blossomed into activity in his division, and that these practices were pursued throughout the election it would not be hard for a Judge to find that in point of fact, though the Tariff Reform League were posing as an independent party, they were in reality the agents of the candidates whose cause they pleaded. But even if it were suggested that they on the Liberal side were affected by the same trouble, he was not concerned to argue this matter from a party point of view. Let them admit at once that there were unworthy motives placed before the electors on both sides in electoral contests. Let them admit that there was base coin in circulation in political controversy. Surely all Members of the House should be glad to join in taking steps by which the currency might be cleansed. This was a matter which affected not one party or another only. It went far deeper, and affected the welfare of the State. Was there anyone in the House who thought that if an elector had been cajoled or coerced or corrupted into giving his vote, he remained an honest, self-respecting citizen? Everybody knew that he at once depised the man who had influenced him and the cause in whose behalf he had been negotiated. He was convinced that many poor people in the country had foresworn their allegience to either one or other of the great parties in the State, because they realised, or thought that they realised, that after all in supporting them they were once more supporting the privileges they sought to destroy. He himself had no sympathy with the views of the hon. Members sitting immediately opposite to him (the Labour Party); but he recognised that their strength lay in the very fact that, by reason of such means as he had mentioned, the electorate had day by day been losing confidence in the great and the wealthy parties in the State—parties that they believed no longer shared their views, no longer were able to realise their hopes, and no longer were able to give effect to their aspirations in this House. He felt that they owed a great debt of gratitude to those hon. Members, not for the views they expressed, but because they had taught men that it was possible to legislate without the inheritance of great estates or the possession of great names. They had done more. They had attempted by direct appeal to the electorate. and not by indirect and stealthy and unlawful means, to awaken their interests in political affairs. He believed the future of either of the great parties in the State depended on which of them would be able to direct and to guide and govern those awakened aims. It was impossible for anyone to look far forward into the darkness which always hid the future. But, unless the lessons that other States had taught were void of meaning, it was in the unlawful use and the stealthy use of wealth in influencing the decision of the electors that they had at once the greatest menace to society and the greatest danger to modern civilisation. He begged to move.

MR. SOARES, in seconding the Amendment, said that after the very able and eloquent speech to which they had just had the pleasure of listening, he felt that very few words were necessary from him. The hon. Member for Cambridge had raised a question of the gravest importance and had advocated it in such a manner that he thought the whole House must be in favour of his proposal. What it meant was that if our present practice in these matters continued it would practically put an end to the statutory limitations of amounts which, under the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, could be expended on elections. He was present at the Mid Devon election, and it might interest the House if he told them the names of the various leagues and societies which took part in it. There were the Primrose League, the Tariff Reform League, the Rural Labourers' League, and whether or not the Unionist Free Trade League was present he was not quite sure. He was afraid that league was a little wobbley on that occasion. There were also the Association for the protection of "the trade," otherwise known as the Brewers' League, the Protestant League, the Free Trade League, the Socialist League, and not less than two of the women's leagues, whose names he did not know. At any rate, he believed that two woman suffragist leagues were working during that election. A well-know Parliamentary agent who was present during that election told him that over and above the legitimate expenses of the candidates, these leagues amongst them must have expended no less than £1,500. He thought that that kind of extra expense was not good for the purity of elections, and he was sure that every Member would feel that, on whichever side of the House he sat. He hoped the Solicitor-General was preparing the Bill which they had been told was to be introduced on this subject by the Government, and he sincerely trusted that the hon. Gentlemen would turn his attention to this branch of the question. He begged to second.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, after the word 'administered,' to insert the words 'especially the way in which large sums, derived from the secret funds of the Tariff Reform League and other similar societies, are spent in electoral contests without being returned in the candidates' expenses.'"—(*Mr. Buckmaster*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he had had the pleasure of listening to the hon. Member for Cambridge on more than one occasion, and although unfortunately, the hon. Member differed from him in politics, he had never listened to his speeches without feeling that he brought to bear a large mass of information and singularly clear ability in endeavouring to put before the House the views which he was quite certain he sincerely held. On this occasion he must apologise to the hon. Member for saying that he could not congratulate him upon his speech. In the first place, he believed it was entirely out of order, because the Motion was to call in question the use of political funds in a way which they knew perfectly well in this House. What was the meaning of the words "political funds"? It meant money that was given to one of the two great Parties in the State, either the Liberal or the Conservative Party, and had nothing to do with the Tariff Reform League, any more than it had to do with the Suffragist League, the trade unions, or the Irish National League.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: He said nothing about us.

Sir F. BANBURY said that the hon. and learned Member who moved the Amendment alluded to the very large amount of money which he said had been expended by, or was in the possession of, the Tariff Reform League. As far as he knew the Tariff Reform League was rather desirous of obtaining money. He believed that the Engineers' Trade Union had funds amounting to £300,000. [A Labour Member: £800,000.] Well, £800,000. He did not wish to exaggerate. At any rate, it was far richer than the Tariff Reform League. He did not complain of hon. Members below the Gangway, when they used the funds of the Engineers' Society in defence of the objects of that body, and for purposes which they believed to be proper subjects of political warfare. Why did not the hon. Gentleman attack the Engineers' Fund or call attention to the way in which it was administered.

Mr. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.): The balance sheets are published year by year.

Sir F. BANBURY said that the Tariff Reform League balance sheets were also published year by year, and he believed that the hon. Member could see a balance sheet of the Tariff Reform League by giving a sovereign to the funds of that league.

He need not continue the subscription, and a sovereign was not much to pay for the information he desired.

Mr. BELLOC rose to a point of order. He said his Motion concerned the secrecy with which these funds were accumulated and administered, and that alone. That being so, surely the remarks of the hon. Member were out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER did not reply to the point raised.

Sir F. BANBURY said he had already ventured to say that the Amendment was out of order, but as it was before them he maintained that he had a right to answer the arguments of the hon. and learned Gentleman. He suggested to the hon. Member that he should subscribe to the Tariff Reform League. Then he would find out whether anything was done by that league against the law, and if he thought they had done wrong he could bring an action against them. That would be a much simpler way of proceeding than discussing the matter in that House. It seemed to him that the Party opposite had got Tariff Reform League on the brain. A short time ago those of them who belonged to the Tariff Reform League were held up to ridicule, and when he was Member for Peckham he was told by the Radical Press that at last the Lord had delivered him into the hands of his enemies. Perhaps He had for the moment, but he was not sure whether in the long run, it was not a greater service to him than anything else that could happen. That was the view which hon. Members took then, and it was quite different from that which they adopted now, because the whole of their speeches were directed against the efforts of the Tariff Reform League.

Mr. BELLOC: May I press Mr. Speaker for your ruling on this matter? Is it not the secrecy of these funds which is under discussion, and have the remarks of the present speaker anything to do with the question of secrecy?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I do not see that the hon. Baronet is violating the rules of the House in any way. I must say that I had grave doubts whether the Amendment was in order, but I was persuaded by the hon. Member for Cambridge that it was in order, and as he has started that hare we must hunt it.

Mr. BELLOC: With the greatest deference to your ruling, is not the Amendment also directed against the secret funds of the Tariff Reform League?

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Be quiet. He is going to tell us something about the funds of the Tariff Reform League.

Sir F. BANBURY said he could quite understand that the hon. Member did not like the turn which the debate had taken, and for once in his life he had made a mistake. He ought to have listened to the Amendment of the hon. Member which referred to the affairs of the Tariff Reform League and then have taken his objection. The way the funds of that league were administered had nothing to do with the House any more than the way in which the trade unions or the Engineers' or the Suffragist League administered their funds had. He supposed it would not be in order for him to refer to the orinigal Motion. He had had a good many years experience in the House, and to the best of his poor ability had always endeavoured not to contravene its rules. He would like, however, to have an opportunity of speaking on the original Resolution, and he would suggest that the Hon. Member should withdraw his Amendment so that it would be in order to discuss the original Motion. He only rose to call the attention of the House to the effort of the hon. and learned Member to draw a red herring across the path, because he could not believe that one whom he regarded as being among the ablest Members of the House could have made the speech he had if he had not some ulterior motive. He hoped the few words he had said would convince the hon. and learned Gentleman that the best thing he could do to retrieve his reputation would be to withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said it was quite true that the Tariff

Reform League was a red herring drawn across their path, and he was glad to have the metaphor recognised by one of the exponents of that policy; but the hon. Baronet was somewhat in error when he said that they had tariff reform on the brain, because that was the very last place where they would find tariff reform.

SIR F. BANBURY: I beg to correct the hon. Member. I said that tariff reform was on the brain of the Party opposite.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH agreed. He would never have thought of suggesting that there was any brain on the other side of the House. He had risen for the purpose not of discussing tariff reform, because, although it might enter into that debate, it was not the subject-matter before the House. Although he was a poor man he was disposed to pay a sovereign subscription to the Tariff Reform League if he could get the information offered. Did the hon. Baronet say that by the payment of one sovereign he could have a list of the individual subscribers to that fund?

SIR F. BANBURY: No, only a balance sheet.

MR. ELLIS GRIFFITH said that that was poor information for the money. How ridiculous it was to compare that information with the information given by the trade unions. If the election expenses of by-elections were prepared properly, they ought to show how much was spent by the Tariff Reform League.

SIR RANDAL CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) expressed regret that he had not been present earlier in the debate, but he had been informed that the hon. Member for East St. Pancras had referred to him by innuendo—the hon. Member not having the honesty to speak outright had indulged in innuendo. The innuendo had been reported to him, and now, at the eleventh hour, and when challenged, the hon. Member for St. Pancras had had the courage to acknowledge that his previous remarks referred to him. He could not find language to speak of the hon. Member's statement in more moderate terms, but the hon. Member would know what he meant when he said that he gave his statement a denial of the most absolute character.

MR. LEA rose in his place, but Sir Randal Cremer refused to give way.

SIR RANDAL CREMER said the hon. Member had had his innings. It was now for him to say that there was not a shadow of truth in the hon. Member's statement. The hon. Member made a similar statement in a daily newspaper in July last. That statement was submitted to the chairman of the Kitchen Committee of the House of Commons. The chairman of the Kitchen Committee agreed that there was no foundation in fact for the hon. Member's statement, and that he (Sir Randal Cremer) had used no insulting language in Committee on the occasion in question. He did not say to the chairman of the Kitchen Committee anything of a slanderous character on the occasion. He had been a member of the House of Commons for twenty-two years and this was the first time he had been charged, and upon such authority. He was sorry the chairman of the Kitchen Committee was not present to justify him and to confirm him in the statement he was now making that there was not the shadow of foundation for the statement made by the hon. Member for St. Pancras.

*MR. LEA said he had listened to what the hon. Member behind him had just said, and he must frankly say that his own opinion of it was that it was concentrated humbug.

*MR. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. Member to apply that expression to the hon. Member for Haggerston?

*MR. LEA: I applied the expression to the speech which the hon. Member has just made.

*Mr. SPEAKER: It is not a proper expression to be applied in this House to the speech of any hon. Member. The hon. Member will at once withdraw the expression.

*Mr. LEA said that in deference to the Speaker's ruling and with great respect he begged to withdraw the expression. When he made the statement with regard to the incident which occurred in the Committee he spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. There were men in that House whom he could cross-examine under oath to prove the truth of every word. He did not think he ever wrote to the *Daily Chronicle*; but he believed he wrote to *The Times*. The words he had used that night he wrote in that letter some months ago. Every word of that statement he was prepared to swear to on oath. It could be proved. If it could be proved before the Committee that he had told an untruth in the matter he would at once resign his seat.

Sir RANDAL CREMER said he could only by the indulgence of the House ask permission to postpone the question until the chairman of the Kitchen Committee was present. The chairman of the Kitchen Committee would testify to the accuracy of the statement he had made, and repudiate the charge which had been brought against him.

*The SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir Samuel Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.): Since the debate began, and until the small and unimportant incident which has just occurred, there was ample good-humour throughout almost the whole of the discussion. We have had most interesting speeches on two questions rather diverse. The first question was with regard to the secrecy of the accumulation and administration of Party political funds and the other interesting topic ingeniously grafted upon that, of the administration, particularly at election times, of certain funds of certain leagues. Upon this occasion I am not going to say anything about the Tariff Reform League or any other particular league or association which may be comprised in the Amendment. I do not desire to introduce anything which may cause bitterness on either side of the House. The foundation of the speech of my hon. friend who moved, was that, in his opinion, Party political funds were an absolute necessity in this country. He boldly said, and everybody admired him for it, that he himself had benefited from these funds. If in that way we have men returned to the House of the calibre and character of my hon. friend, I think he is right in what he said, that political funds, if not a necessity, have a useful and healthy function in this country. One thing must have delighted everybody, and that is that it has never been suggested from beginning to end that the receipt of any portion of these funds has influenced the vote of a single Member in the slightest degree. I do not know whether it is necessary to state my own view with regard to the secret administration of the funds. I am not speaking as a member of the Government or on behalf of the Government; this is not a Motion directed against the Government; the qualification which I possess for speaking with reference to these funds is that I know nothing at all about them. I think I did apply when I was a green youth eighteen years ago before I came to the House, to the Party to see whether or not they might give some assistance to a poor but, as I thought, a humble deserving object. I had already been chosen unanimously by the constituency which has returned me ever since, to be their candidate, and the answer I got from those to whom I addressed my communication was that as the constituency had taken the choice of their own candidate into their own hands the Party funds had no play in the matter at all. I have never contributed and have never received, and that is my only qualification for speaking on this occasion. But, seriously, I think there is a difficulty in this House of Commons passing a Resolution that no domestic arrangements ought to be made by any Parties in the House or in the country with reference to such matters unless they are published in the light of day to the whole world. There will, I am certain, be great danger and great peril arising from passing a Resolution of that kind. With regard to the Amendment, I am entirely in accord with my hon. and learned friend with regard to the advisability of having in this country as far as possible perfect purity in electoral contests. There is purity in this House and no one will say that there has been a suggestion of any want of political purity on the part of the humblest Member of this House. I might almost go further and say the poorer the man is the less does anybody suspect his purity; but it has struck a great many in this House that electoral contests are open to the possibility of becoming influenced more and more by the wealth of great persons and associations. There is a tendency to revert to the huge expenditure upon elections which took place before the Corrupt Practices Act. It may be that an Amendment in the law in this direction is required and if the House passed a Resolution in the terms of the Amendment we shall have to do our best, if we cannot punish that state of things under the Corrupt Practices Act, to ensure electoral purity by strengthening the law in that respect. But we have much in our hands already to do, and if I, speaking as a Member of the House of Commons, may be allowed humbly to offer a piece of advice, it would be that the Amendment should be withdrawn if the mover withdraws his Motion. If not, I will declare what I am going to do and what I think many right hon. and hon. friends on this side will do; if my hon. friend who moved the Resolution persists in going to a division, then we cannot vote for that without the Amendment being tacked on to it. Therefore, if he will not withdraw the Motion, I hope the hon. Member will not withdraw his Amendment either.

Mr. MARKHAM said it was a very extraordinary defence when the Solicitor-General told them this was not a Government question. There was no charge whatever made in that House, at all events he did not identify himself with the charge, directly or indirectly, against the personal honour of any Member of either Front Bench. It was purely against the system, and he deeply regretted the tone of levity which had characterised the debate. Outside the House at all events the country felt very deeply on this question. The simple question that the country asked was this. Were they living in an age in which titles were bought and sold for money, and was any party in the State privy to that proceeding? It would be ludicrous for any of them not to be fully aware that such a state of affairs existed. He maintained that it was a grave danger to the State that large funds should be placed in the hands of one man only to administer. When the country was made aware that peerages carrying with them legislative powers were openly sold, and that such honours were being bought for considerations of hard cash, they would be inclined to resolve that the hereditary rights of legislators should be curtailed. The whole system was indefensible from beginning to end. It was a grave danger to the State that large funds should be in the hands of one man. An easy remedy was open to the Government—namely, forthwith to throw all election expenses on national funds. Every rich man in the House became a peer, a baronet, or a knight. ["Why are not you one?"] He was too poor for that. ["Oh, oh."] These men got their titles because they gave large sums to the party funds, and it cast a stigma on the large number of worthy men who had done good service to the country to classify all of them with the men who openly bought their honours. He maintained that the Amendment was not an honest Amendment, but was designed to shelve the question and to baulk discussion. Why should the hon. Member single out one league and not mention the other societies? Why should he not mention the Free Trade League as well? He hoped that the hon. Member's constituents would bear this action in mind ["Oh, oh!"] and if they did not he would make it his business to go among them and tell them.

Captain J. CRAIG (Down, E.) said the last speaker had opened his eyes to a large extent to the bitterness of feeling that seemed to exist on the benches opposite when one differed from another on a matter of this sort. He wished to direct attention to a subject which had been neglected by hon. Members, who had taken part in the discussion. The Amendment referred to "the secret funds of the Tariff Reform League" and the original Motion referred to the privileges and character of the House as being imperilled by the secrecy with which political funds were administered. Hon. Members, no matter what constituencies they represented, knew nothing whatever of what was going on in secrecy. If there was secrecy, he held that the House had nothing to do with it. How could the House interest itself for a moment in the contests which took place in the various constituencies. He wished to dissociate himself from party in this matter. He believed that Ireland was freer from secrecy in connection with its political organisations than perhaps any other part of the United Kingdom. They had branches of the United Irish League in the south, and Orange societies in the north, but in regard to finance they were not at all strong. This Amendment referred just as much to the funds of the United Irish League and the Orange societies as to the funds of the Tariff Reform League. He had the honour to belong to the Orange body and the Tariff Reform League, and he was proud of it. The Amendment was absolutely futile if it was meant to prevent organisations being formed for the purpose of securing a representative of a particular interest in a particular constituency. In his own particular case he fought his election on tariff reform lines. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: And against Home Rule.] What were the facts? There was not a Member representing an Ulster constituency who, he could safely say, had been offered directly or indirectly assistance by the Tariff Reform League, Free Food Union, Irish Land League, or any other association, to return them to the House of Commons. He thought the speeches which had fallen from hon. Members opposite had been greatly exaggerated. He did not believe that hon. Members were influenced in the slightest degree by the Tariff Reform League in their action in this House or their allegiance to their party. He admitted that some hon. Members might be more interested in the Amendment than in the original Motion, because they thought that behind what appeared on the Paper a very direct attack would be made on the Tariff Reform League, but he believed that it would have no effect whatever on that magnificent organisation which was doing so much for the country. The seconder of the Amendment had tabulated a large number of organisations which he said had interfered in the Mid-Devon election. No Member who had gone through a serious contest such as that could have failed to discover that small knots of interested people formed themselves into what they called a society and did their utmost to return a candidate of their choice. Was it to be assumed for one moment that if either the Resolution or the Amendment were passed by the House, those who were interested in votes for women would cease to form themselves into what they considered a fair organisation, with the necessary means at their back, to enforce their views on the candidates in any constituency? Was it to be suggested for a moment that those who were earnestly in favour of temperance reform would cease to form themselves into organisations to urge their views upon the two or perhaps it might be three candidates in an electoral contest? Or was it to be expected that a particular class, say railway employees, which combined against another class of employees such as engineers, would be prevented by any such Resolution or Amendment as was before the House from forming themselves into a society to forward their opinions and lay them before Parliamentary candidates? No candidate could, in his opinion, be harmed by any associations of the kind which could be formed. If he was in order he would ask permission to move to amend the Amendment.

MR. BELLOC rose in this place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put"; but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG, continuing his speech, moved to amend the Amendment by the insertion, after the word "funds," of the words "at the disposal of the Liberal Party or."

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton), in seconding the Amendment, said he would only make a few observations, as he hoped the House would come to a decision on this matter, and would not allow the question to be talked out. Everybody knew perfectly well that at elections much of the propaganda used, and a good deal of the funds which were spent, did not come from the electors, but from the funds of various parties. He ventured to say that no party was innocent in that connection, and it was time that they seriously took the subject into their consideration and dealt with the matter radically, so that they might prevent the transfer of seats being effected by money raised in this manner. He begged to second.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"In line 2, after the word "funds," to insert the words "at the disposal of the Liberal Party or."—(*Captain J. Craig.*)

Question put, "That those words be there inserted in the proposed Amendment."

The House divided:—Ayes, 53; Noes, 153. (Division List No. 15.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F
Balcarres, Lord
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish,Rt.Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clynes, J. R.
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
McArthur, Charles
Markham, Arthur Basil
Morpeth, Viscount
Nield, Herbert
O'Grady, J.
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Seddon, J.
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool, Walton
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker,Col. W.H. (Lancashire)
Wortley, Rt.Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Craig and Sir Frederick Banbury.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker,Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Beaumont, Hon. Herbert
Bell, Richard
Bennett, E. N.
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,Rt.Hn.Sir J.T. (Ches.)
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clough, William
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh), S.
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras,N
Duckworth, James
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.

Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras,E
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C.E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W.Monmth
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowden
Rogers, F. L. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hn. T. (Hawick, B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs. N.W.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, RtHn.E. (Clackmannan
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whiteley, Rt.Hn.G.(York, W.R
Whiteley, John Henry(Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Belloc and Mr. Edmund Lamb.

Question put, "That those words be there inserted."

The House divided :—Ayes, 134 ; Noes, 60. (Division List No. 16.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bennett, E. N.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Chance, Frederick William
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C.H(Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras, N
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Elibank, Master of
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Glendinning, R. G.
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Haworth, Arthur A.
Helme, Norvol Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David

Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncast'r)
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Grady, J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Richards, Thomas(W.Monmt'h
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Scott, A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Strauss, B. S. (Mile End)
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wason, Rt. Hn. E(Clackmannan
Watt, Henry A
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whiteley, Rt. Hn. G.(YorkW.R.
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Buckmaster and Mr. Soares.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn. Sir Alex.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Glover, Thomas
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hodge, John
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Jowett, F. W.
Keswick, William
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
M'Arthur, Charles
Markham, Arthur Basil
Nield, Herbert
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robinson, S.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Shackleton, David James
Summerbell, T.
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomson W. Mitchell- (Lanark
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Walsh, Stephen
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Noes—Viscount Morpeth and Mr. Claude Hay.

Main Question, as amended, proposed.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) rose to continue the discussion on the main Question.

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, and objection being taken to further proceeding, Mr. Speaker proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Colonel Seely rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put"; but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question, and the Debate stood adjourned.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. George Whiteley, Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey) gave notice of a Motion to suspend the Eleven o'clock Rule To-morrow (Thursday).

Adjourned at seventeen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 20th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: North British and Mercantile Insurance Company.

Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with: Leith Burgh; Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.—The Order of yesterday referring the Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee on Wednesday next discharged.

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª, and committed: The Committees to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3959. Italy (South Italy);

No. 3960. Germany (Finances for 1907, with Estimates for 1908).

BOARD OF EDUCATION (REGULATIONS FOR CERTIFIED EFFICIENT SCHOOLS).

Regulations and conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education, under section 48 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, of elementary schools in England, excluding Wales and Monmouthshire (being neither public elementary schools nor schools applying for recognition under any other Act of Parliament), as certified efficient schools.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment, and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) (No. 2) BILL [H.L.].

House in Committee (according to order): Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª on Monday next.

VOLUNTEERS AND THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

The Earl of DONOUGHMORE, who had given notice—

> "To call attention to the forms which have been issued by the Army Council dealing with entry into the Territorial Force (Army Forms E. 501, E. 501A, E. 502, and E. 502A), and to move for Papers,"

said: My Lords, I had put this Motion down on Tuesday before I was aware of the fact that the important debate initiated by the noble Duke behind me would be adjourned until this evening, otherwise perhaps I should have chosen a more convenient day. But as the adjourned debate is to be resumed almost immediately, I do not intend to detain your Lordships for more than a few minutes, and I do not propose to trouble the House with my Motion for Papers. I merely wish to draw attention to these documents with the object of putting to the noble Earl the Under-Secretary two specific questions, which would not have been necessary if the noble Earl's colleagues in another place had given us a little fuller information when a Question was asked upon this subject.

The documents I refer to are the new attestation papers which have been brought into use for the Territorial Army. There are two notice papers and two forms, one set for new enlistments after April 1st, and the other for transfers from the present Volunteers into the new Territorial Force. They differ very considerably from the old form for enlistment in the Volunteers—why I cannot imagine—and they differ, I might almost say, in a most offensive manner. I am sure there is no intention on the part of the War Office to be offensive, but the wording of these documents is most unfortunate

In the old form of enlistment for the Volunteers it was thought unnecessary to go into more than general subjects of medical fitness, but there is a list of terrible diseases specified in the new form, enough, I should think, to frighten any recruit from enlisting when it is, as it evidently will have to be, read out to him, and especially when he is given to understand that he will render himself liable to be sent to prison with hard labour if he does not give correct answers to them.

There are other things in this paper which are unkind to the new recruit. Why on earth should the War Office bother its head as to whether a man in the Territorial Army has had his child baptised or not, and it seems to me quite unnecessary to call upon him to go into such extreme details as the date and place of baptism and the name of the officiating minister. It is equally unnecessary that he should be asked to specify whether, when he married, he married a spinster or a widow, for it must be remembered that under 2 per cent. of the Territorial Army can ever qualify for the separation allowance. These things were not considered necessary in the old Volunteer form, and I think it a pity they were inserted in this form. We understand that a Committee is now considering these matters at the War Office, and I sincerely hope that the result will be a simplification of these forms and the withdrawal of the unnecessary, and, to my mind, discouraging provisions.

But there are two points to which I should like the noble Earl to give me specific answers. The first has reference to the oath to be taken by the member of the new Territorial Force. The old oath called upon the Volunteers to—

> "faithfully serve His Majesty in Great Britain for the defence of the same."

The new oath calls upon him to serve "honestly and faithfully"—I do not know why the word "honestly" has been put in, but still I do not wish to lay any stress upon that—and faithfully defend His Majesty, and so on, "against all enemies." Why have the words "in Great Britain for the defence of the same" been omitted from the new oath? I know that by the Act passed last year, it is illegal to employ the Territorial Force outside the United Kingdom unless they volunteer specially, under provisions laid down. Why, then, if you were going to make no change in that particular in the conditions of service in the Territorial Army, was it considered necessary to omit those nine words from the new oath? I am sure there is not the least intention to deceive anybody, but, if you are calling upon these men to serve for the defence of the United Kingdom only, why do you not continue to say so?

The Earl of Donoughmore.

The second Question I wish to ask is this. A Committee at the War Office is going into these papers to advise the Secretary of State as to whether or not it is necessary to make any changes in them, but we have not been told that the use of these papers is not being continued throughout the length and breadth of the land. These forms were issued three weeks ago—Army Order No. 43, I think, is the exact reference—and, so far as we know, they are being used at the present moment in connection with transfers. I want to know, first, is that the case? If it is, are instructions being issued to General Officers that they are not to use them pending the Report, which I presume will come to hand in a few days, from this special Committee? Without those instructions the forms will be used, as General Officers can take no notice of any statement made in Parliament by the Secretary of State that he is considering amendments in the form. I hope the noble Earl the Under-Secretary will be able to tell us, either that these forms have not been issued, or else that instructions have been given that they are not to be used pending amendments that may be made in them—amendments which, I am certain, will have to be made, to put it on the lowest grounds, in the interests of civility towards the future members of the Territorial Army.

THE EARL OF MOUNT-EDGCUMBE: Before the noble Earl replies to the Questions of my noble friend, perhaps he may find it convenient to answer one which I put to him incidentally on Tuesday night, and of which I have since given him private notice. My Question was, whether the refusal of an employer to give a man in his employ leave to attend camp will be accepted as a reasonable excuse for non-attendance, and exempt the man from punishment under Clause 21 of the Act.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (The Earl of PORTSMOUTH): My Lords, in reply to the Question put to me by Lord Donoughmore, I should like to remind him that these forms will not come into force until 31st March, and that we have plenty of time between this and then to revise them, if necessary. A Committee has been appointed to go into the whole matter. I think the words the noble Earl objected to were "against all enemies."

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE: No; I object to the words "in the United Kingdom" being left out.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I can assure my noble friend that it is not the intention to make these men liable for foreign service. The alteration in the form of the oath has been made from the point of view of convenience. It was considered that such a course would obviate the necessity of re-attesting a man should he desire to volunteer for foreign service. I would again emphasise what I have said, that the alteration in no way affects his freedom from liability for service outside the United Kingdom. With regard to medical inspection, upon which I have heard a considerable amount of criticism, it was laid down quite clearly in a leaflet issued some time ago that no Yeoman or Volunteer transferring into a force of the same arm would be required to undergo a fresh medical examination, which would only be required in the case of men transferring from the foot to the mounted services. In reply to the Question put to me by the noble Earl, Lord Mount Edgcumbe, I have to say that if it is shown that attendance would entail the loss of his employment to a soldier of the Territorial Force, this we consider may be taken as a reasonable excuse such as the Act requires, relieving the man of liability for the fine due for non-attendance. But he should state his case, and receive permission not to attend, before the training begins.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: My Lords, I hardly think that the noble Earl's explanation on the point raised by my noble friend Lord Donoughmore will be considered satisfactory. Surely a member of the Volunteer Force who wishes to join the Territorial Army ought to know clearly whether he is signing on for service in the United Kingdom or for further service. Under the wording of the form as it at present stands, it is open to the Government to interpret his attestation as applying, not merely to service in the United Kingdom, but to service abroad. I think the noble Earl would do well to give us a direct answer as to the intentions of the Government with regard to this attestation form. We have a right to ask that this point should not be left in doubt. I troubled your Lordships with a very few words the other night, and I have since been the recipient of a number of communications which have emphasised the view I endeavoured to put forward in the course of a few sentences—namely, that there is very great doubt, hesitation, and anxiety with regard to the whole of this attestation form. The minatory clauses in it have been construed very much against the attesting Volunteer. The arrangement of it is, in itself, both remarkable and hardly ingenuous. The religious qualification and the size and magnitude of a man's foot are put in the same column. The size of a man's foot we understand; what the magnitude is I do not know, not being a bootmaker; and that appears exactly opposite and in the same column as the question whether the man is a Roman Catholic or a member of the Church of England. And, again, at the head of all the important questions is the intimation that if any false answer is given it will lay the man open to imprisonment with hard labour—a most unfortunate form to be placed before a man who is a Volunteer. Those are points of arrangement, and are comparatively minor ones compared to this important point, that the Government should state clearly that this attestation is for service in the United Kingdom, and that any further service on which a member of the Territorial Army may be willing to enter will be made the subject of a further signature and a further attestation.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I think my noble friend has rather unduly emphasised these points. It was quite unnecessary for him to flog a dead horse, for I had already stated, in reply to Lord Donoughmore, that we had no intention of using this attestation form for the purpose of rendering these men in any way liable to service abroad. I can guarantee that we will make that quite clear. Many of the details to which reference has been made are now being considered by the War Office Committee, and, where necessary, corrections will be made.

EARL CAWDOR: What troubled us on this side of the House was that the noble Earl, in his previous answer, gave us to understand that the words to which my noble friend Lord Donoughmore called attention had been excluded from the present form for convenience, and to leave an open door so that a man who had taken up his service under this attestation form should still be supposed, in some way which was not described, to be available for foreign service. The noble Earl the Under-Secretary shakes his head. Well, will the noble Earl tell us exactly what is intended?

LORD LUCAS: In adopting this form of oath the Army Council have followed the same procedure as in the case of the Imperial Yeomanry. If your Lordships will look at the attestation form of the Imperial Yeomanry, a force which was enlisted for service just as definitely within the United Kingdom as will be the new Territorial Army, you will see that the words "in the United Kingdom" have been omitted. No difficulty was raised about it at the time, and I do not know that there has been any objection. The point of convenience is this, that if, in time to come, a member of the Territorial Army does wish to volunteer for service abroad, it will not be necessary to re-attest him. That, however, does not in the least imply that he is, by this attestation, "roped in" for service abroad, for you have it definitely stated in the Act that he joins the Territorial Army for service in this kingdom.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: If there is to be any alteration in the form of attestation, may I ask the noble Earl the Under-Secretary to consider making clear the point that the calling out of the Reserves embodies the Territorial Force. At the present moment the Reserves are first called out, then the Militia is embodied, and then the case of the Volunteers is considered.

LORD LUCAS: If the noble Duke will look at 18D. he will see that that is definitely stated.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: I do not think the men would gather from that that they must be embodied when the Reserves are called out, but rather that they were possibly liable to be then embodied.

TERRITORIAL FORCES ACT—THE MILITIA.

Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, and on the following Questions put by the Duke of Bedford—(1) If non-training bounty will be paid to men belonging to the disbanded Militia battalions; (2) If the special Infantry Reserve will be at once equipped in the same manner as the Regular Reserve; (3) If any additional officers will be added to the present establishment of officers serving with the Line in consequence of the posting of Line officers to the third Special Reserve battalions.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: My Lords, I think the most convenient course for me to adopt is to reply, first, to the specific Questions that were addressed to me by the Duke of Bedford, and then to the series of Questions put by Viscount Hardinge and Lord Raglan, before dealing with the Army Order of December 23rd to which the noble Duke referred, and the other speeches that were made in your Lordships' House on Tuesday. The noble Duke asked if non-training bounty will be paid to men belonging to the disbanded Militia battalions. An Army Order of the 5th instant deals with this point, and lays down that those Militiamen who belong to disbanded battalions, and who do not elect to join any of the Special Reserve battalions, will receive the non-training bounties which are payable on 1st October, 1908, 1st December, 1908, and 1st February, 1909, if they are then serving.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Will the noble Earl continue the quotation from the Army Order?

THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I am afraid I cannot do that now. I have a great many quotations to deal with as it is. Next, the noble Duke asked if the Special Infantry Reserve would be at once equipped in the same manner as the Regular Reserve. In reply I may inform him that it is the intention of the Army Council to arm and equip the Special Reserve with the same pattern of rifles and accoutrements as are held ready for the Regular Reserve. No alteration will, however, be made until after the completion of the annual trainings this year. Then the noble Duke asked if any additional officers would be added to the present establishment of officers serving with the Line in consequence of the posting of Line officers to the 3rd Special Reserve battalions. As the number of Regular officers allotted to battalions of the Special Reserve will exceed the number of Regular officers at present allotted to infantry depôts, the Army Council propose to make up the difference by increasing the total establishment of Regular officers. This increase will, of course, be effected gradually, according as each Militia battalion is re-organised into a Special Reserve battalion, so that each Reserve battalion on re-organisation will receive its proper complement of Regular officers.

I now come to the Questions of which private notice was given to me by Viscount Hardinge. First, the noble Lord asked how, as regards senority, the officers of the Special Reserve will rank with the Line officers that are to be attached to each battalion. This is a most delicate and difficult question, and we are fully alive to the importance of this point. It is one to which my noble friend the Duke of Bedford referred in his speech on Tuesday, and it seemed to me that he referred to it with great reasonableness. It is true that paragraph 65 of the Army Order of 23rd December indicates that the present arrangement, as laid down in the Royal Warrant of January, 1895, and embodied in paragraph 3 of the King's Regulations, would remain in force. We, however, fully appreciate the difficulties arising from the present arrangement, and, although it is a matter of some complexity and one upon which I cannot make a definite statement at present, it will be carefully considered, and, I hope, satisfactorily dealt with.

My noble friend Lord Hardinge next asked whether, during the non-training period, the command of the battalion was to be as at present under the colonel or under that of the senior attached Line officer. To this the Answer is that during the non-training period the battalion does not exist as such. During this period the senior Line officer will command the permanent staff and the recruits under training. Then Lord Hardinge asked, in the case of a disbanded battalion, what is to happen to the officers of that battalion? In reply to this Question, I have very little to add to what has been already promulgated in paragraphs 72 and 73 of the Special Army Order of 23rd December; the first laying down that officers other than the lieutenant-colonel commanding will, with their own consent, be attached to a remaining Militia battalion of the regiment to which they belong, or they may apply to be attached to a Militia battalion of another regiment whose establishment in officers of the same rank as the applicants is incomplete. In either case they must enter the Special Reserve of officers. When the Militia battalion to which they are attached is converted into a Reserve battalion at the termination of the annual training in 1908, they will be posted to it according to the dates of their original commissions. By paragraph 73 it is arranged that officers not accepting these conditions may, subject to the qualifications that if field officers they must be under fifty-five years of age, and if captains under fifty years of age, join the existing Reserve of officers, or they may retain their commissions.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: You mean resign their commissions.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I should have said resign their commissions. Lord Hardinge also asked on what basis were units selected as extra reserve battalions. The selection of the twenty-seven battalions of Militia to be retained as extra reserve battalions was based on a variety of considerations. In Great Britain battalions were chosen so as to be fairly distributed between commands. In the choice of battalions so distributed military requirements, recruiting facilities, and other matters were gone into. The decision arrived at was based upon the conditions as a whole.

will take the noble Viscount's next two Questions together. He asked—

> "How is it proposed to procure subaltern officers for the Special Reserve battalions, and what is to be the length of the recruits' training of those officers on joining?"

and—

> "When will the conditions be published regarding the payment of £40 grant to Special Reserve officers on joining, and will they be retrospective?"

Both of these questions are dealt with in a Royal Warrant which is being prepared and will very shortly be published. It would not be right for me to appear to anticipate the Royal Warrant, but I do not think there can be any objection to my stating that the maximum length of training for recruit officers will ordinarily be one year, but that this period will be liable to reduction when young men are in possession of certain public school or University certificates. We are taking steps to organise the Volunteers corps at public schools and Universities with a special view to their members being trained on lines suitable for the career of officers. Any young man who attains a certain standard of military efficiency will be allowed to become an officer of the Special Reserve without spending a whole year on recruit training. The standard will generally be prescribed by regulation. In February last year the first Report of Sir E. Ward's Committee on the Reserve of Officers was laid on the Table of the House. The general principles embodied in that Report have been adapted to the requirements of the Special Reserve in the matter of officers. The conditions of service, outfit allowance, and the rest will be laid down in detail in the Royal Warrant to which I have referred. With regard to the payment of the £40 grant, by which presumably my noble friend means the outfit allowance referred to in the recent Army Order of 23rd December, it is not proposed to make that grant retrospective. I may, however, say that, should a Militia officer be transferred to another arm of the Service, he will be reimbursed to the extent of any expense entailed by the change of uniform within the £40 limit.

LORD RAGLAN: Will that apply to an officer if transferred from a rifle battalion to a red-coat battalion, or *vice versa?*

The Earl of Portsmouth.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I cannot answer the noble Lord offhand, but perhaps he will communicate his Question to me. The noble Lord also asked whether it was to be understood that no man would be allowed to re-enlist in the Special Reserve over the age of 30. I am not sure whether the noble Lord refers to men who are at present serving in the Militia or to men who, having been recruited under the new system, shall have completed their original period of engagement. If he refers to serving militiamen, they will not be taken for the Special Reserve if they are 48 years of age or over. If he refers to recruits under the new system, they will enlist in the ordinary way, provided they are between the age of 17 and 30, and may continue to serve by re-engaging (not re-enlisting) until they are 40 years of age, after which they will not be allowed to serve further.

LORD RAGLAN: In the absence of the noble Viscount who asked the Question, I desire to state that what my noble friend Lord Hardinge had in mind was the case of old soldiers who are at present allowed to enlist in the Militia over the age of ordinary recruits. I understand that those men will not now be allowed to enlist after the age of 30. That will cut all old soldiers out of the Special Service section.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: That is so. The final Question put to me by Viscount Hardinge was whether authority could be obtained to allow an extra meat ration to be given to weakly recruits on joining on the recommendation of the medical officer. It is not proposed to increase the present meat ration for weakly recruits. The daily scale as now issued—namely, ¾lb. in barracks and 1lb. under canvas—is considered adequate. The concession recently given to Regular recruits over the age of 18, of drawing the messing allowance of 3d. a day from the date of enlistment instead of after three months service, applies also to recruits of the Special Reserve. This increased emolument would enable the recruit to provide any extra meat ration.

I now come to Lord Raglan's series of Questions, which arrived this morning. The noble Lord desires to know what is to be the future training of the Artillery of the Special section. The Answer is, six months' drill on enlistment, and 15 days annual training, including two days gun practice. On that point I would refer the noble Lord to Appendix 8 of the Special Army Order of 23rd December last; but if by training he means drill, I would refer him to the Syllabus issued with that Army Order. Next the noble Lord asked, What units will they be trained in? They will do their six months recruits' training with the Field Artillery brigades, as shown in Appendix 2 of the Army Order of 23rd December, being attached to the existing Royal Garrison Artillery Militia units. For this year, if they have finished their six months recruits' training before the annual training, they will do their annual training with the training brigade. When the Royal Garrison Artillery units have become Field Artillery Reserve units, their men will train with the unit which will be trained in the training brigade. Here I would refer the noble Lord to paragraph 11 of the special Army Order of 23rd December.

"What officers will they have?" is the third Question. The establishment of officers is not yet laid down. It is not at present known what Royal Garrison Artillery Militia units will elect to become Field Artillery Reserve units, or whether existing Royal Garrison Artillery Militia units will be able to recruit men for Field Artillery. Next the noble Lord asked, how will they be provided with horses for training? As the corps, after assembling at their headquarters, join the training brigade the horses of the training brigade will be utilised. That, my Lords, disposes of the Question, and I thought it well to clear off the Answers to those Questions before attempting to deal with the debate that was raised by the Duke of Bedford on Tuesday. In that debate Lord Raglan said that last year or the year before the submarine mining section of the Engineers was abolished, and he went on to say, laying great stress upon this, that the effect had been that, whereas he had previously obtained for his regiment seventy or eighty recruits from Swansea, last year he did not get one.

LORD RAGLAN: I said I got nine.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: *The Times* reports the noble Lord as saying that last year he did not get one. At any rate, he got a very small number. As a matter of fact, the submarine mining section of the Engineers have not been abolished. The service has been transferred to the Admiralty.

LORD RAGLAN: I beg the noble Lord's pardon; they were disbanded and abolished straight away.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I must differ from my noble friend. They are transferred to the Admiralty. It is obvious that in seafaring places like Swansea submarine mining recruits would be attracted more to the Navy than to the Army. Speaking of the Engineers, the noble Lord went on to say that, according to the proposals laid down in the new Orders, there would be only fifteen days training, and that this, too, would leave no time for musketry. He also said that there always had been a school of soldiers who had been anxious that Engineers should not shoot.

LORD RAGLAN: That is so.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: He added that he did not know why, because he believed that in South Africa the Engineers fired more rounds than any other arm. These men to whom the noble Lord referred — Militia Engineers—will be principally employed on siege and railway companies, and their functions, therefore, appear to us to be very different from those of the combatant infantry. That is the reason why they have not got the same time allotted for musketry.

LORD RAGLAN: They have not any time allotted.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: The noble Lord went on to say that he had the gravest doubt of men coming out for six months training.

LORD RAGLAN: Hear, Hear.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: Of course, that is, and can only be, a question of opinion. We believe — we may be wrong—that on the whole employers prefer six months preliminary training a year he can join without forfeiting the bounty. That seems to be a perfectly fair and reasonable proposal.

But perhaps the most important criticism of the Duke of Bedford, because it more vitally affects the whole Army scheme, is the relation of the Special Reserve to the Line on mobilisation. The noble Duke said that on the outbreak of war we must deduct, first, the men leaving the Special Reserve to enlist with the colours; secondly, men under twenty and too young for foreign service; and, thirdly, men medically unfit for foreign service. As to the first point, I would remind the noble Duke that, by the Royal Proclamation calling out the Reserve, these Special Reservists automatically become part of the Regular Army. There is no question, therefore, of their enlisting to serve with the colours. As to the second point, the noble Duke said—

> "If enlistment is to begin at seventeen and under, not more than one-third will be twenty years of age."

But the Army order lays down seventeen as the minimum, and as Special Reservists will be the same age as Militiamen, the noble Duke grossly exaggerated when he said not more than a third would be over twenty years. The last public return of the British Army shows that out of 68,000 Militia infantry only 18,100 were under twenty years of age, so that more than two thirds were over that age. Those are remarkable figures, because they prove the exact contrary to what the noble Duke stated to your Lordships, and I should very much like to know upon what calculation the noble Duke made that statement.

LORD RAGLAN: How many of these men were over thirty years of age, and, therefore, men who will not be in the future Special section at all?

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I am afraid I have not the figures to enable me to answer that Question. Next the noble Duke deducted 20 per cent. for men medically unfit. But the recruiting and organisation authorities at the War Office maintain that it will not exceed 13 per cent. Then, in consequence rather of arguments of this kind the noble Duke contended that the ample Reserve maintained by the late Government would now be allowed to run out and would not be adequately refilled.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: The noble Viscount cheers that statement. It is quite true that we have reverted to the system of seven and five years which existed at the outbreak of the South African war, under which the Regular Reservists sufficed to bring the Regular battalions up to war strength, but did not provide for wastage in war. Lord Midleton changed the system to three years with the colours and nine years in the Reserve, which certainly tended to create a much larger Reserve. But the noble Viscount was succeeded by Mr. Arnold-Forster, who discontinued the system, thereby indicating that the three and nine, which was found extremely difficult on account of drafts for India, was not necessary to secure the Reserve for the Regular Army.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: In the speech of Mr. Arnold-Forster, in which the three and nine was for a time abandoned, you will find that Mr. Arnold-Forster definitely declared it was impossible to continue the British Army on seven and five, or eight and four, and said it was intended to have a large number of men recruited for two years with ten in the Reserve.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: At any rate, Mr. Arnold-Forster never gave effect to that intention. The Duke of Bedford, speaking of the class of men we are going to get in the Special Reserve as almost a parody of an efficient soldier, compared the cost of a Section A man of the Army Reserve with the cost of the Special Reservist just joined. He said that, while the Army Reserve man cost only £18 5*s.* per annum, the cost of these inferior Special Reservists would be £19 2*s.* 6*d.* The Section A man is a first-class soldier, but he is the result in some cases of seven years, and in other cases of a less though a considerable number of years, of colour service; and during the whole time he has been in the Army he has been costing the country about £57 a year. The £19 2*s.* 6*d.* referred by the noble Duke as to the cost of the Special Reserve man is what he will cost the country in his first year of six months initial training, and not his average annual cost over his period of service. I submit that to make a proper comparison the average annual cost of each man over his period of service should be taken. The publicity that has attached to the criticisms of the noble Duke has made it necessary that I should deal with them in detail and that I should be able to show, as I think I have, that in a great number of cases the noble Duke has rather miscalculated the effect of what it is proposed to do and what is being done. It seems to be thought that the Special Reserve will be no more than a phantom.

LORD RAGLAN: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: Well, that is a matter of opinion, and I would like to give some figures with regard to recruiting. Recruiting for the Special Reserve began on January 16, and since then 2,351 recruits have joined. That is eminently satisfactory; but as regards the men of the disbanded Militia battalions, of those who have replied to a letter asking them whether they will become Special Reservists or remain Militiamen or take a free discharge, 60 per cent. have offered to join the Special Reserve.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: Is the noble Earl perfectly certain that these men knew their full liabilities?

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: In my opinion there is no doubt about that. I probably take a higher view of the intelligence of these men than the noble Duke does. I have quoted these figures because in my opinion they are more eloquent than words, and I think they show that the Act is going forward and promises to be a great working success.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY My Lords, I am sure your Lordships must be grateful to the noble Earl for the very detailed reply he has attempted to give to my noble friends who sit behind me. As I listened to the noble Earl, I could not help regretting that the practice does not prevail in your Lordships' House which is to be found in another place, where Questions in respect of such details as we have been dealing with are put and answered separately rather than in the bulk. I cannot help thinking that, if such a practice prevailed, the noble Earl himself would have found it easier to deal with the details of the Questions put to him. He would have recognised that many of his Answers were not quite complete, and if it had been possible to put Supplementary Questions "arising out of the Answer which has been given"—the recognised form in another place—I think the noble Earl would have had an opportunity of amending his Answers in a way more satisfactory to your Lordships.

I take, for example, the Answer to a Question as to the promise given that officers who were transferred from one arm of the Service to another should have a grant made to them in respect of the expenditure upon the change of uniform. Upon being pressed, it appeared that the noble Lord the Under-Secretary had not really realised what was the import of his Answer, because, although apparently a grant was to be made in respect of uniform, that did not apply if the change was from a red coat to a green coat. I am sure the noble Earl did not mean that. He must have meant that if a grant is to be made in respect of change of uniform, it would be of universal application. The truth is, I thought the noble Earl was almost cumbered with the mass of papers with which he was dealing, and that there were, perhaps, moments when the hard-worked secretary who assists him had forgotten to correct quite accurately the typewritten copy which was submitted to the noble Earl.

I will try and indicate to the noble Earl some points on which, I think, he hardly satisfied your Lordships as to the completeness of the Answer. There was, for instance, an important Question, as to the relative seniority of officers on a Militia engagement and Regular officers attached, which was put by Lord Raglan. The noble Earl hardly attempted to answer that Question, the upshot of his reply being that it was still under consideration. Then there was the question of free food—not in the ordinary connection of those words, as we know them in modern political controversy, but as applied to recruits. There the noble Earl, I think, misunderstood the Question of my noble friend the noble Duke. The noble Earl said the messing allowance was separate from the pay. That is, no doubt, true as regards the greater part of the soldier's service, but it is not true with regard to the recruit. To say that the man receives 1s. a day and free food is not accurate with regard to the recruit. He receives 1s. a day, less the messing allowance.

In my opinion the noble Duke, if I may say so with great respect, was quite right in dwelling upon these things, because there is an unwholesome tradition, I am afraid, attaching to documents put forward from the War Office to enlist recruits, that they are not severely accurate, and nothing has cast more discredit on the whole process of recruiting in this country than that the recruit should find, after he is enlisted, and is unable any longer to choose for himself, that he has been misled as to the precise terms of the remuneration he was to receive. Then there was the question—a very important question —as to the man's capacity to buy his discharge. I did not follow the noble Earl's answer, but I did follow my noble friend's charge. The noble Duke alleged that a Special Reservist—I am not sure whether it was the general case of a Special Reservist, or of a man who had hitherto been in the Militia—could not secure his discharge under a payment of £6. I do not think the noble Earl met that in any detail, or in a way satisfactory to your Lordships. That, again, is a very important point, because one of the inducements held out to a Militiaman to enlist has always been that if he is dissatisfied, he can, at a comparatively cheap cost, recover his freedom. That has always acted as a great inducement to recruiting, and if it has been changed, either advisedly or inadvertently, so that henceforward a man, instead of paying a moderate sum, will have to find £6 in order to get his discharge, then I say the War Office has struck a severe blow at recruiting.

There is another important point on which I think the noble Earl entirely misunderstood my noble friend. The noble Duke pointed out that, as a result of the changes which had been made, henceforward a number of recruits would be admitted, not to the Special Reserve, but to the Regular Army, under eighteen years of age. That depends upon these circumstances. A man may enlist in the Militia Reserve at seventeen; after six months drill, whether he is eighteen or not, he may elect to be transferred to the Regular Army. That is a great and important change, because a man is not considered fit to go abroad until he has reached the age of twenty; and, therefore, if the War Office have by this indirect method reduced the age at which men can join the Army, they have, to that extent, interfered with the full complement of men who can be sent abroad.

There were other points. There was the case of the unfortunate men who belong to the disbanded battalions. In that case the first idea appears to have been that they were not to receive any bounty for the current year. Then a Supplementary Army Order was issued to say that they should receive the non-training bounty for the current year; and the noble Earl quoted this amended Order, with great satisfaction to himself, and I suppose, to the Government, as disposing of the contention of my noble friend. But I asked him to continue the quotation, and if he had found, among the rather voluminous documents before him, this little one, he would have been able to read to the House this concluding sentence—

> "The training bounty for 1908 will, however, only be payable to Militiamen attending the current year's training."

Therefore, in order for Militiamen in these disbanded battalions to take advantage of this Order they must attend the training for the current year; but we find that, by another Army Order, they are not to be allowed to attend any training in the current year. I have no doubt that is an inadvertence on the part of the War Office, but the noble Earl will, I think, admit that he has not really disposed of my noble friend's point.

Then there was the question of the position of the officers of the disbanded battalions. They, as I understand, are to be attached to the remaining battalion of the regimental district. The mind quails before the picture of these multitudinous officers all attached to one battalion, and at the thought of what work there will be found for them to do. What are you to do with twice the proper number of captains and twice the proper number of subalterns? Has that little difficulty occurred to the War Office, or do they intend that they should be unemployed until they can be absorbed? That is another little question which I offer for the consideration of the noble Earl and his advisers. The noble Earl told us, in great detail, how new officers were to be appointed, how they were to serve in cadet corps, and, after a certain period, to be considered eligible as officers for the Special Reserve. I have no objection to that system. It is experimental, however, and it may not work. I should have liked the noble Earl to have supplemented his Answer by telling us what they are going to do in the meantime while these young officers are maturing for service. How is the Special Reserve to be officered?

Lastly, there was the Question, put to the noble Earl in the course of his speech by Lord Raglan, as to what regulations were to be made with regard to the enlistment of old soldiers in the Special Service. That apeared to me to be a very important point. The War Office seem to have arrived at the decision that no man is to be enlisted in the Special Reserve after the age of thirty. By such a decision the War Office will exclude all old soldiers who might be willing to enlist, and whose service, I venture to say, would be most useful in strengthening the Special Reserve.

In considering the working of this new Act, I ask myself what was the object of the Government in establishing the Special Reserve, and, indeed, in all the military changes which this Act has brought about? I think the Government realised, and realised to the full, that they were dealing with a voluntary service. I say the Government realised it, but I very much doubt whether their military advisers did. The Government were perfectly right, as I ventured to say to your Lordships several times last year, in desiring to increase the military resources at the service of the country, but those resources must be increased with due regard to the voluntary character of our Army. Unless they can carry public opinion with them, unless they can enlist the hearty, sincere, and full co-operation of all concerned, the experiment will not succeed; and the course of the debate two nights ago showed that the Government have failed to make their scheme popular with my noble and gallant friends who then addressed your Lordships. That is a very important failure on their part, because, unless the Government can command the support of the officers commanding the Militia battalions in this country—and I have, no doubt, my noble friends who addressed you fully represent the views of other Militia commanding officers—their experiment is bound to fail. Therefore, I think they ought to consider most carefully the case which the noble Duke made, to see if they cannot, in some way, meet him and the other noble and gallant Lords who have addressed your Lordships and convince them that the Government intend to study the susceptibilities and interests of the officers and men of the Force to the fullest extent possible. The main effect of the speech of my noble friend the noble Duke was this. He showed that the advantage which the Government expected to get from this new scheme might easily be very much exaggerated. The noble Earl said, in the course of his speech, that my noble friend underrated the number of Special Reservists who would be capable of going abroad and performing the draft-producing function which the Government intended for them.

*THE EARL OF PORTSMOUTH: I think I said he had exaggerated the number of men who would be unfit.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I meant that. The noble Duke had, said the noble Earl, exaggerated the number of men who would be unavailable for the purpose of going abroad. It is possible he may have exaggerated a little. But what else do the Government gain by their new system? They gain a rather elaborate machinery for the absorption of those soldiers of the Regular Army who are unfit to go abroad, and of those who are returned sick or wounded from active service. I do not attach a great deal of importance to this machinery. My impression is that when a great effort has to be made by this country most of that machinery will disappear. The Special Reserve *cadres* will be used very freely in order to increase the number of battalions in the field, and we shall probably be brought back to the position in which this country so often finds itself, when we have to create new machinery on the spur of the moment. That is what I expect will happen, and if you set against your plan the amount of friction and unpopularity which the system bids fair to produce among the officers of the Militia, you will find you have made an exceedingly bad bargain. Therefore, my Lords, I would urge the Government, in every way in their power, to study the suggestions which my noble friends have put before them, with a view to endeavouring to meet them if they possibly can.

Have the Government tried to make the great changes produced by this Act as smooth as possible? I do not think they have. Take the question of the disbandment of the twenty-three battalions. I noticed that the noble Earl hardly dealt with that subject in his reply just now. Take the case of Lord Bathurst. My noble friend commands, as I understand, a very efficient battalion; yet that battalion is disbanded. I do not make any charge of breach of faith against the Government, but I do say this, that the general impression last year certainly was that the disbandment of certain Militia battalions was called for by their inadequacy and their inefficiency. It was said, No doubt the Militia service has great traditions; no doubt most of the Militia battalions are very creditable, but there are certain Militia battalions which no one can defend. Those of us who are not familiar with every battalion in the Service bowed our heads and said that may be, and that no doubt the Government were well advised in putting an end to battalions no longer capable of performing efficient service; and we imagined, perhaps rashly, that the twenty-three condemned battalions had been justly condemned. But when this Act comes to be worked we find that that is not the case, and that battalions against whom nobody can say a word—on the contrary, which have received high praise from the Regular officers in authority over them—are to be disbanded, all their traditions put an end to, and all their susceptibilities trampled upon. Why was that done? I think it a most profound mistake. I cannot understand why the Government, who must have been conscious of the inherent difficulties in all great changes, should have added to them by what is apparently a very great injustice. I know the reason put forward in the case of my noble friend Lord Bathurst's battalion. It is said that though he commands a very good battalion, yet his headquarters are not at the depot, and that, therefore, the linked battalion whose headquarters are at the depot was preferred to his. That battalion was retained, and Lord Bathurst's was disbanded. But it so happens that the battalion at the depot was the bad battalion, and his the good battalion. Yet so wooden are the War Office, so utterly unable to distinguish the substance from the form of their regulations, that they allowed this good battalion to be dismissed and retained the bad one in order to conform to some idea of symmetry which is dear to the official mind.

That is one complaint I have to make. But I ask myself, What is the genesis of the number of battalions dismissed and retained which the Government have adopted. Why have they fixed upon twenty-three to be disbanded, and what value is there in the number 101 that they should have said that 101 battalions are to be retained upon the establishment? I understand, of course, why the seventy-four third battalions are retained, that is one for every two Regular battalions; but, with regard to the balance, the twenty-seven extra special battalions, why was the number twenty-seven selected. The conclusion we arrived at was that they were the only efficient battalions left; but it now turns out that that is not the case. I think the Government would have been better advised if they had adopted some defensible position. One of the contentions I ventured last year to urge on the Government was this, that they should abolish the two categories of Special Reserve battalions, and have only one category; that instead of having third battalions which should have one function, and fourth battalions which should have another, they should have only one class of Special Reserve battalions with duties and liabilities precisely the same. I urged that on the Government, and thought I had prevailed. I did not imagine that my eloquence had achieved that result, but I flattered myself that the inherent reasonableness of my argument had converted the Government. But I am sorry to say that turns out not to be the case. I am not sure whether the noble Earl has refreshed his memory as to the assurance he gave to your Lordships last year, but he did tell us that, with regard to the establishment and numbers of third and fourth infantry battalions, there would be equality, and that both the third and fourth battalions would have a chance of being used for units in war as well as supplying drafts. I concluded from that that there was to be no longer any difference, but it appears that that is not the case. I find that there is a difference in the establishment of officers and in the functions intended for the two sets of officers. I think that a profound mistake; and, apart from any personal consideration, I think it invidious that some battalions should be selected and told they are fit to go abroad as units the moment war has begun, but that other battalions should be told that they are not fit and must remain behind and produce drafts. It would have been far better to have treated them on the same footing, to have given both an equal opportunity of serving as units in the field.

Then let me say a word as to drafting. The noble Earl has correctly quoted the assurance which he gave last year in respect to drafting. I hope the Government are bearing in mind that assurance, namely, that, so far as might be practicable, when these men are ordered abroad, they should go under their own officers. I say I hope they are bearing in mind, because I can find no trace of that assurance in any of the Papers, Army Orders, leaflets, and posters, that have come under my notice. I may have missed one, and therefore I do not state it absolutely, but so far as they have come under my notice, there is no trace of that assurance. I would ask the noble Earl how he proposes to carry out that pledge, because upon that I lay the greatest stress. For my own part, nothing would have induced me to give so favourable a reception to the Bill last year if the noble Earl had not given that pledge to the House. If the words are left in the Order as they appear now, it will act as a great deterrent to existing Militiamen to transfer, and, I think, to future Special Reservists to enlist. Moreover, it would be a breach of faith on the part of the Government to your Lordships' House.

I do not anticipate that there will be any such breach of faith. But let the noble Earl remember that towards the close of next training, in the month of June, it will be the duty of the noble Duke and other Militia officers in this House, and of myself, to try and induce those who serve under our command to transfer. We shall tell them the truth, the absolute truth; we shall not go a hair's breadth further than we have authority from the Government to go; and unless we are able to tell them, being absolutely convinced in our own mind that we are giving a pledge which will be fulfilled, that if they go abroad they will go with their own officers, we shall not be able to do anything to help you. Nothing would induce me to deceive the men under my command in that respect. Therefore, I ask the noble Earl to produce, before the time comes, the terms which, upon the good faith of the Government, we may offer to the men in respect of going abroad under their own officers. That is all I have to say with regard to the men.

I now come to the officers. There is the position of the commanding officer in the non-training period. The noble Earl has just told us that he will have no position. That is his position, technically, now in the Militia. He has no authority except during the training; but, disagreeable as that has been, the new state of things will increase its disagreeable character. Formerly, the preliminary drill was comparatively short, and the annual training comparatively long, and, if the commanding officer had no authority during the preliminary drill, he had authority during the annual training, and his disability was not felt anything like so greatly as it will be under the new state of things, because the preliminary is to be six months and the annual training only three weeks. Therefore, I think the Government would be well advised to reconsider the position of the commanding officer in the non-training period, and to give him authority then as during the training period.

Then there is the question of relative seniority of Regular officers and Militia officers serving in the same battalion with which the noble Earl dealt, but upon which he gave us no assurance whatever. I hope that which has been suggested by my noble friend will be adopted, and that these officers will rank, not first all Regular officers and second all Militia officers, but according to the seniority of their commissions, whether Regular or Militia. There was one point on which the noble Earl did not touch—the power of an officer to resign his commission. That was pressed upon the Under-Secretary by the noble Duke. As I understand, the Special Reserve officer, under the rank of field officer, is in this peculiar position, that, unlike the Volunteer or Regular officer, he cannot resign his commission until the close of the year's service in which he happens to be. That might act as a great disability and inconvenience to a gentleman holding a Militia officer's commission. He might receive a favourable offer to serve, either the Government or some private enterprise, abroad, and might be unable to accept it because he could not resign his commission. We should have been glad to receive an assurance from the Government that in all reasonable circumstances, the Special Reserve officer, like every other officer, would be able to resign his commission, except, of course, in time of war. I hope this suggestion will receive favourable consideration at the hands of the Government.

I hope they will not regard it as an impertinence, but I do not think they could be better advised than to ask some of the Militia commanding officers to consult with them as to the propriety of these mitigations in the severity of the operations of the Act to which I have referred. If the noble Earl or his advisers at the War Office could meet some of the leading Militia officers and avail themselves of their practical experience, I think they would do a great deal to promote the success of their plan. I hope for the success of their plan. I do so on the purest patriotic grounds. We may not all of us have approved of the new system; but now it has been established, it is our duty to do our utmost to make it succeed, and we ask the Government to give us every facility so that we may make it succeed. We ask them to use our practical knowledge and personal experience, and to accept our advice as to how it can best be made to succeed; and if they do that, they will do more for the success of their plan and the defence of the country than any number of Army Orders such as the one which has been the subject of to-night's and of Tuesday's discussion.

Lord ABINGER: My Lords, I cannot regard the explanation of the noble Earl the Under-Secretary of State for War with respect to the position of Militia officers in the Special Reserve battalions as entirely satisfactory because officers who have served for fifteen years or more in the Militia will find themselves junior to much younger Line officers. The noble Earl has said that this is an exceedingly difficult and delicate question, and that it shall receive the attention of His Majesty's Government. May I ask that it shall receive very careful attention, because if these Line officers are brought in as senior to the Militia officers you will not retain the Militia officers. I cannot admit that the speech of the noble Duke contained, from the point of view of the Militia officer, any exaggeration at all, and I am sorry to say that the impression left on our minds by the new regulations is that the senior Militia officers are no longer wanted. In answer to the Question whether the senior Line officer or the colonel of the battalion would command in the non-training period, the noble Earl stated that the senior Line officer would be in command of the permanent staff, but that during the non-training period the battalion ceased to exist. In Paragraph 23 of the Army Order it is said that these battalions "thus will become in the fullest extent training battalions." Yet we are now given to understand by the noble Earl that during the non-training period these third Reserve battalions are non-existent. I wish to say a word as to how the Militia officers feel with regard to this scheme. It is only in your Lordships House, and occasionally—very occasionally—in the Commons House of Parliament, that we are able to discuss this scheme at all. If we discuss these matters outside, we are threatened with the pains and penalties of the Service. I think, sometimes, that those who are responsible for the scheme feel that anybody who dares to criticise it is a deadly enemy of the scheme. I had the temerity in June to recommend to the Army Council that they should trust us a little. Perhaps that was rather bold on my part, but I cannot help entertaining the feeling that they do not trust us. We should like a fuller measure of confidence, and to be allowed to explain to them a question which is entirely one for the men themselves. I have nothing further to say on the subject, but I should like to have clearer answers on the point to which I have referred.

*LORD LUCAS: My Lords, perhaps I may be allowed, very briefly, to state what I believe is the answer to one or two of the questions raised since my noble friend spoke. First of all, there is the question of the pay of the new Special Reservist. It seems a very hard thing to meet the criticisms of all one's critics. The Government were attacked earlier this afternoon for the extreme explicitness with which they had drawn up the attestation form of the Territorial Force; they are now taken to task on the opposite ground, for veiling their intentions with regard to the Special Reserve. The document to which exception has been particularly taken to-day was the leaflet which gives in detail the pay the Special Reservist is going to receive, and certainly I should have thought it difficult to have a more explicit document. In the first place, it is set forth in bold type that, on enlistment, the infantry recruit's weekly pay amounts to 7s. It is then stated that, when he is eighteen years of age, he gets the 3d. which brings his weekly pay up to 8s. 9d. It then sets out, in full, the total amounts which are deducted in stoppages—in the case of an Infantry private, 2s. a week. Therefore you have the whole of the particulars fully set forth, and I think greater clearness almost an impossibility. Then there was the question of the bounty. I think the noble Duke, in his speech the other day, gave it as his interpretation of the new regulations that the Militiaman who does not transfer into the Special Reserve and does not take his discharge but remains a Militiaman will not draw any of the bounty.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: I said that that was so under the Army Order of 23rd December, but that an Order was subsequently issued under which he did receive the bounty, provided he trained as a Militiaman, and that that created a difficulty with regard to the disbanded battalions.

*LORD LUCAS: I do not think the subsequent Order can be construed in that light, when it is read in conjunction with the notice sent to the disbanded battalions, in which they are given the alternative of remaining in the Militia until their term of service expires. In that notice they are told they would not be called out for training, but would remain liable for embodiment in time of emergency. Therefore the Militiaman who remains in the Militia cannot say he has not been warned that he will not be called out, and he will not for that reason get the training bounty, but will get the three non-training bounties of £1 each. Then there was the question as to the age at which Special Reservists are to be allowed to enlist in the Army. The Army Order of 23rd December lays down that a Special Reservist who is under the age of eighteen may enlist in the Army at the end of his six months preliminary training as a Special Reservist—that is to say, you cannot possibly have a lad enlisting into the Army under the age of seventeen and a half, and he may be anything over that. Up to that point it is a new departure; but what I believe influenced the Army Council was the fact that, after all, the lad would have had six months continuous training, and at that time would be as good a soldier, physically, as the ordinary lad who is able to enlist at the age of eighteen. As to the question of the officer not being allowed to resign his commission, I do not think that any officer is likely to be compelled to remain in the Special Reserve longer than he wishes; but if he does wish to resign, he may be called upon to refund the £20 he receives as an annual bounty. I am sure there is no intention of keeping him against his will until he has completed his year. That, I think, answers most of the points. The noble Marquess, Lord Salisbury, indulged in prophecy. He asked what use the new scheme was, and gave it as his opinion that the whole thing would break down in time of stress. There is no machinery that will not break down if you deliberately misuse it. But the merit of this new scheme, which entails the entire reorganisation of the Militia, and, to a certain extent, the breaking up of that great force, is that for the first time in the military history of the country that which every military authority agrees is essential will be supplied—namely, a special, definite machinery for the training at home of the men who are to be sent out to keep the Army in the field up to the required strength. Is it not infinitely better to keep the veteran *cadres* in the field up to the strength by that system rather than to send out raw *cadres*? Here you have for the first time machinery for training men, and unless you deliberately send out your training machinery to the front where it is not intended to go, you will avoid confusion and breakdown. That is the justification for the change which the Militia is being asked to undergo.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 20th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz: Derby Gas Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the Bills comprised in the List reported by the Chairman of Ways and Means as intended to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in the following case, viz.: Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.: Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the

Bills introduced pursuant to the provisions of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, and which the Chairman of Ways and Means had directed to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have been complied with in the following case, viz: North British and Mercantile Insurance Company (Ocean Marine Insurance Transfer, etc.).

And they have certified that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in the following case, viz.: Leith Burgh.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS].

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills that in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.: Leith Burgh [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

DOVER GRAVING DOCKS BILL.

"To authorise the construction and maintenance of graving docks and quays and other works in connection therewith at Dover, in the county of Kent," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

LOWER THAMES (GRAYS) DOCK BILL.

"To incorporate the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Company to authorise and improvement of the channel of the River Thames and the construction of a dock, a railway, and other works in the counties of Essex and Kent; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

MADRAS RAILWAY COMPANY (PURCHASE) [ANNUITIES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed "That it is expedient to authorise the creation of Annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings, and three pence, agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending the 31st day of December, 1907."—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked for an explanation of the circumstances under which this transfer had taken place and the provision made for the future working of the line.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER (Sir HENRY FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): It is merely a formal Resolution. The details could be discussed in Committee on the Bill.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS thought the policy of the Government with regard to Indian Railways was one which the House ought to consider, although that perhaps was hardly the occasion to enter into a long argument with reference to the facilities with which capital was invested on railways in India.

*SIR HENRY FOWLER explained that this was the last purchase of what were known as the guaranteed Indian railways. Originally, the old railways were started by separate companies under guarantee by the Secretary of State to whom was reserved the option to exercise the right of purchase at the end of certain periods by cash payments down or by way of annuities. That policy had been regularly pursued by every Secretary of State, and all the great Indian Railways originally guaranteed have been purchased with the exception of this one. Whether this policy was to the financial advantage of the Government of India might be a matter for discussion, but the Secretary of

State was advised by the most competent authorities that the arrangement made in this instance would result in a saving to the Government of India of about one and a quarter millions. The revenues of India were perfectly well protected, the shareholders were satisfied, the Indian Office was satisfied that it was a very good bargain for the Government, while no burden was thrown on the British taxpayer. The Resolution was merely formal, the Standing Order providing that no charge should be imposed on the revenues of India without the matter being submitted to the House.

Sir HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth) was glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that this was in the interest of India. No doubt this was merely a formal Resolution and his hon. friend would find a full explanation in the Bill itself. This was, however, the constitutional method by which the House was called upon to confirm the financial arrangement.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said that not only was no charge imposed on Indian revenues, but they were saved a payment of 5 per cent. on a very large sum of money. The objection raised could only proceed from a misunderstanding.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) thought the Committee was in some difficulty in dealing with this matter which was one of great importance. As he understood it the House was practically asked to vote—[" No "]—well, not to vote directly, but to sanction the borrowing under Government guarantee of £12,000,000. They were told it would result in a great saving to India, but he would like to know how the money was to be borrowed. He understood the usual practice was to borrow half in India and half in this country. It was surely a fair question to ask was that practice to be followed in this case.

And, it being Three of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee Report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

PETITIONS.

CLUBS' REGULATION.

Petition from Bradford, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Acton; Bideford; Brighton; Children's Protection League (fifty); Forest Hill; Grafton; Highbury; Huntington; and Newcastle-on-Tyne; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Barnoldswick; Belper; Bournemouth; Bradford; Bury; Choppington; Chorley; Coalville (two); Colne; Colyton; Croydon; Crystal Palace; Darlington; Deptford; Derby; Frenchay; Hapton; Heaton Moor; Heywook; Hinckley; Hindley; Horsham; Huddersfield; Knutsford; Leeds; Lewes; London (two); Newcastle; Newport; Norwich; Oldbury; Old Trafford; Oxford; Park Lane; Poole; Preston; Ringwood; Rotherham; Sale; Selly Park; Shepton Mallet; Southampton; Southport; South Shields; Stand; Stockton; Stratford; Sudbury; Tavistock; Tunbridge Wells; Walthamstow; Washington Station (two); Woodgate; and Yeovil; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Regulations and Conditions affecting the recognition by the Board of Education under Section 48 of The Elementary Education Act, 1876, of Elementary Schools in England, excluding Wales and Monmouthshire (being neither Public Elementary Schools nor Schools applying for recognition under any other Act of Parliament), as Certified Efficient Schools [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES.)

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 3959 and 3960 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Johnstown Estate, co. Meath.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether James Casserley and James Duffy, have with others, memorialised the Estates Commissioners for holdings on the Johnstown estate, county Meath; and whether their application will receive favourable consideration.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Question appears to relate to the estate of J. P. Kearney, which was for sale in the Land Judge's Court, and which has been purchased by the Estates Commissioners. The memorial alluded to in the Question has been referred to the inspector who is dealing with the estate, and a copy of the Question will also be forwarded to him for his information.

Master's First Aid Certificates.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state what is the minimum respective curricula requisite for obtaining a master's or mate's first-aid certificate under St. John and St. Andrew Ambulance.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) In order to qualify for examination for the certificates of proficiency in first aid granted by the St. John Ambulance Association a candidate must attend at least four of a course of five lectures, each of two hours duration. In the case of the St. Andrew Ambulance Association the candidate must attend at least eight out of a course of twelve lectures of one hour and a half's duration. The syllabus of the lectures under the two associations covers practically the same ground.

Woman Suffrage Bill.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): To ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that the first Order of the Day was not definitely disposed of before Five o'clock either on Friday, 7th February, or Friday, 14th February, 1908, he will give the House the opportunity to suspend the Five o'clock Rule on Friday, 28th February, 1908, in order to arrive at a decision with regard to the first Order for that Day, viz., the Second Reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill.

(*Answered by Sir H. Campbell Bannerman.*) No, Sir, the Government do not see any reason for taking this course.

Poor Brothers of the Charterhouse.

MR. RADFORD (Islington, E.): To ask the hon. Member for the Elland Division, as representing the Charity Commissioners, whether he is aware that the Poor Brothers of the Charterhouse, all of whom are of the age of sixty years and upwards, are required by the regulations of the governors to attend chapel service twice on Sunday and once every day of the week, and that they are liable to a fine of 1s. for absence on Sunday and 3d. for absence on a week-day; and whether he will consider whether any steps can be taken to put a stop to this system of compulsory conformity.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) The regulations under which the fines alluded to in the Question are permitted to be imposed are made under the Act of 3 Charles I. and the scheme of 3rd December, 1872 regulating the charity. The former master, Dr. Haig-Brown, used to enforce them, but the present master, Canon Jelf, who has held the post for a year, has not yet attempted to enforce them. It may, therefore, perperhaps be hoped that the practice of fining for non-attendance at chapel will fall into disuse, without any outside interference, as inconsistent with modern ideas of the conduct of denominational institutions.

West Ham Workhouse.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, N.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the overcrowding of the West Ham Union workhouse to the extent of 272 inmates; and if he intends taking any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am aware that the number of inmates of the workhouse is about 272 in excess of that for which it is certified. Two old schoolrooms have, however, been converted into dormitories and are in occupation. They take eighty-three of this number, thus reducing the excess to 189. The old schools are about to be used as part of the workhouse, and thus further accommodation will be provided. One block, which will take fifty beds, will be occupied in a few days, and five other blocks, each taking the same number, will be brought into use in succession as speedily as possible.

Unemployment.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has received resolutions passed by distress committees and local government councils, in addition to the opinions expressed by the Association of Municipal Corporations, urging the necessity for further legislation with financial provisions for dealing with unemployment; whether he has observed that, following the growth of unemployment as attested by official figures, public disturbances and demonstrations of distressed workers are increasing in various centres; and whether, therefore, he can suggest to the Poor Law Commission the necessity of reporting at once anything they may have to recommend on the subject of providing work, with a view to this House taking immediate steps to meet the urgent demand for employment.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have received resolutions of the kind referred to in the Question, and I am aware that some demonstrations have taken place. I will bring the suggestion of my hon. friend under the notice of the Royal Commission, but I am afraid that it will not be practicable for them to report in time for legislation during the present Session.

Motor Imports.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask the President of the Local Government Board how many of 76,567 private motor cars and motor cycles licensed in the year 1907 were of foreign manufacture.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am unable to say. I observe that the Returns of the Board of Trade give the number of motor cars and motor cycles imported in 1907 as 4,819 and 1,770 respectively.

Employment in the Licensing Trade.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the total number of 258,654 persons, enumerated by the General Report of the Census, page 126, as being occupied in England and Wales as maltsters in breweries and distilleries, as wine and spirit merchants, as keepers of inns and hotels, as publicans, beer sellers, and cider dealers, as cellar men, beer bottlers, barmen, and barmaids, and others engaged in the service of inns, hotels, and eating-houses, includes all persons engaged in the making or selling of intoxicating liquors; and, if not what additional numbers are shown by the Census to be employed directly in these trades.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am informed by the Registrar General that the 258,654 persons referred to in the Question include all those who definitely returned themselves as employed in making intoxication liquors, but that the number probably includes some persons employed in temperance hotels, and, therefore, having no connection with the making or sale of such liquors. Many persons who are engaged in the storage and distribution of intoxicating liquors and in clerical work connected with the sale and distribution of these liquors are included under such headings as draymen, carters, warehousemen, commercial clerks, and commercial travellers. Persons, such as grocers and confectioners, who hold licences and sell intoxicating liquors as a subsidiary part of their business are included, together with their employees, under the headings grocers, confectioners, etc. The total number of persons employed in these trades cannot be shown in the Census, as each person can be classified under one heading only, the principal occupation being selected in each case.

Foot and Mouth Disease in Midlothian.

LORD DALMENY (Edinburgh, Midlothian): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, with reference to the recent Midlothian and District Foot-and-Mouth Disease Order, and having regard to the extent of the county of Midlothian and to the fact that the outlying districts of the county are unaffected by disease, he will issue an order excluding from the infected area West Calder and similar centres, and thus placing them on the same footing as Edinburgh and Leith for slaughtering purposes.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) We issued an Order yesterday which will place West Calder and similar centres on the same footing as Edinburgh and Leith for slaughtering purposes. It will come into operation on Monday next. The necessity for keeping West Calder under stringent restrictions is due to the fact that manure from the infected byre was deposited in that parish.

Milk-Blended Butter.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh Central): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that the words milk-blended butter are to be used in the Reports of the Monthly Accounts of Trade and Navigation; and whether, in view of the pledge given by him to Parliament on 26th July, 1907, that the words milk-blended butter would disappear and would cease to exist as a name except in the Act of Parliament, he will take steps to prevent the words milk-blended butter being so used.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) In making the statement to which my hon. friend refers, I had in mind the manner in which the article would be dealt in commercially. I am afraid that it will be difficult always to avoid the use for official purposes of the generic expression which was necessarily employed in the Act of last Session, but I will see whether any arrangement can be made to meet the wishes of my hon. friend so far as the Monthly Trade and Navigation Accounts are concerned.

MR. C. E. PRICE: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, how many applications have been made to the Board for the registration of names for the article formerly known as milk-blended butter; how many have been sanctioned; and what are they.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Perhaps my hon. friend will allow me to refer him to the Answer I gave to a similar Question addressed to me by the hon. Member for West Limerick on the 18th instant.

Australian Naval Defence.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will lay the Correspondence which has passed between the Admiralty and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia in regard to the proposed reconstitution of the Australian naval forces, or, if these Papers cannot yet be laid, whether he can give the House any information on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Correspondence on the subject referred to by the right hon. Gentleman is still proceeding, and an Admiralty letter having an important bearing on the question was sent out by the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the last mail on the 14th instant. Until this letter has been received by the Commonwealth Government it would be inexpedient that any correspondence should be laid upon the Table.

Rosyth.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if any provision is being made in the contracts for works at Rosyth that the granite and other stone to be supplied shall be quarried in the United Kingdom, or, failing that, if he will make it a condition that, if any foreign granite or stone should be used, British trade union rates of wages must be paid to the workmen who quarry such stone.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The contract particulars are not sufficiently advanced for any statement to be made on the subject now.

Pneumonia in the Navy at Chatham.

MR. CLYNES: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the fact that an epidemic of sickness, chiefly pneumonia has broken out amongst the men in His Majesty's Navy at present at Chatham; and, if so, whether he can state the number of men who have died, and also to what is the cause of the epidemic ascribed.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The only sickness at Chatham that partakes of the nature of an epidemic is influenza, which is prevalent there as elsewhere, and this has been followed in a few instances by pneumonia. Four men have died within the last fortnight of this latter disease. No cause can be ascribed for the outbreak of influenza, which is apparently seasonal.

Bylchau School, Denbighshire.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): To ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state what steps, if any, the Board of Education have taken to satisfy themselves of the necessity for a new school at Bylchau, Denbighshire, as required by Section 8 of The Education Act, 1902, after an objection has been duly lodged.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Board satisfied itself by a careful examination of the evidence furnished by the local education authority and by the inspector as to the existence in the district of a real demand, on the part of parents, for the establishment of a council school within the parish of Bylchau. No facts were alleged in the appeal subsequently received which were not outweighed by the evidence already in the Board's possession.

Departmental Administration.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer when the promised Committee to inquire into the *status* of the Board of Trade, Local Government Board, and Board of Agriculture will be set up, and what will be the composition of such Committee.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I stated that the inquiry would not be by a Committee, but would be undertaken by the Government itself. I am not at present in a position to make any further statement on the subject.

Licensing Bill.

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state what day he proposes to introduce the Licensing Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I propose to make a statement at the close of Questions.

Indian Famine Code.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will consider the advisability of suggesting to the Government of India that the Famine Code should be known as the Famine Prevention Code, and that a similar alteration should be made in the nomenclature relating to this subject, in order to the correction of misapprehensions widely entertained in this country regarding the prevention of famine in India.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I will call the attention of the Government of India to the hon. Member's suggestion, and they will no doubt give it their consideration.

Judicial Administration in India.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India what proportion of the total number of civil and magisterial cases tried in India is disposed of by judges and magistrates who are natives of India and what proportion by Judges and magistrates who do not answer to that description.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) It is impossible to give with accuracy the information for which the hon. Member asks, as the judicial statistics do not classify the work of the Courts according to the nationality of the presiding officers; but it is safe to say that by far the larger number of cases are disposed of by Indian Judges.

Indian Co-operative Credit Societies.

MR. REES: To ask the Secretary of State for India whether statistics are available showing for different provinces the operations of co-operative credit societies; and whether the organisation of co-operative agricultural credit has already been sufficiently developed to be of actual assistance to cultivators in areas affected by the agricultural depression at present existing in parts of India.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) The hon. Member will find the statistics which he desires in the Reports on the subject published annually by the several local governments. I shall be happy to supply him with copies of the 1906–7

Reports as they reach me from India, if he cares to have them. As to the second part of the Question I have no information. The Reports for 1907–8 will doubtless deal with the point.

Censorship of Indian Press.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the case of Bhaskas Vishnu Fadke, editor of the Vihari newspaper, Bombay, who was recently sentenced to two years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 300 for two articles published in his newspaper; and whether, in view of the statement by the prisoner at his trial, he will recommend the Government of India to consider this case with a view to a mitigation of the sentence.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I find that the editor in question was tried by a Judge of the High Court of Bombay and a jury, the majority being Indians. He was found guilty by the jury with only one dissentient, and sentenced to two years simple imprisonment and a fine of £20. He had previously been warned, but persisted in the publication of the articles complained of. In these circumstances I am not prepared to take the action suggested by the hon. Member, which would be entirely contrary to practice.

Kenmare Evicted Tenant.

Mr. N. J. MURPHY (Kilkenny, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Estates Commissioners have power to buy out a grabber on an evicted farm in order to reinstate the original tenant in his own home; and, if so, if they will proceed at once to deal with such grabbers on the Kenmare estate, especially as the landlord has agreed to facilitate the reinstatement of tenants in every way possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I refer the hon. Member to Section I (3) of The Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, which provides that no tenanted land shall be acquired compulsorily which is in the possession or occupation of a *bona fide* tenant using or cultivating the same as an ordinary farmer in accordance with proper methods of husbandry. The cases of evicted tenants on the Kenmare estate are at present the subject of inquiry and consideration by the Commissioners.

Kenmare Estate, Kerry.

Mr. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Congested District Board have placed before the Estates Commissioners the offer made to them as to the sale of the congested districts on the Kenmare estate, County Kerry; whether they have also handed over to them any reports or inquiries made by them; and whether the Estates Commissioners have taken, or propose to take, any steps to deal with the congested portions of the estate in accordance with the powers vested in them.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The reply to the first two parts of the Question is in the negative. No proceedings for the sale of the congested portion of the Kenmare estate have been instituted before the Estate Commissioners, and they have therefore taken no steps in the matter.

Greenisland Estate—Mr. Small's Report.

Mr. DILLON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, why a copy of Mr. Small's Report has been refused to the tenants on the Greenisland estate by the Earl of Shaftesbury; and on what grounds a letter was written by the Estates Commissioners, on 22nd December, 1906, to the solicitors of the Earl of Shaftesbury, undertaking to exclude from the sale any tenants who would sign agreements to pay twenty-six years purchase.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The practice of the Estates Commissioners is to treat the reports of their inspectors as confidential, and following this practice the Commissioners refused to furnish to the tenants a copy of the Report of the inspector referred to in the Question. The Commissioners fully inquired into the reasons why certain of the tenants on the Shaftesbury estate refused to sign purchase agreements on the same terms as those agreed to by the other tenants and they are of opinion that there is no sufficient reason for refusing to proceed with the sale to those tenants who have agreed to purchase.

Sale of the Greenisland Estate.

Mr. DILLON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the negotiations for sale of the Greenisland estate of the Earl of Shaftesbury, in which the tenants are called upon to pay over twenty-six years purchase of their present rents, which invested at 3¾ with the bonus would bring in 109 per cent. of the gross rental; whether the Commissioners are bound to sanction such prices without inquiry; and, if so, whether they are bound to secure a bonus to the landlord by declaring the holdings in question an estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The advances referred to in the Question come within the limits of the zones, and as such the Estates Commissioners are bound to make the advances. The Commissioners, following the decision of the Court of Appeal, hold that, so long as the prices are within the zones, the fact that such prices are high is not in itself a reason for refusing to declare the lands to be an estate. There may be other reasons which would justify the Commissioners in refusing to declare lands to be an estate for the purposes of sale by landlord to tenant direct although the prices are within the zones, such as that the estate is congested, or that the holdings are held in rundale, or are uneconomic. No such reason, however, existed in the case of Lord Shaftesbury's estate, and the Commissioners, therefore, felt bound to declare the lands to be an estate.

Baunraugh Hurling Tournament.

Mr. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the employees of Lord Gough, Lough Cutra Castle, Gort, held a hurling tournament quite recently at Baunraugh, near Gort, with an intimidatory purpose; whether the walls of the farm of Mr. James Mahoney, an annuitant tenant, were levelled to the ground on the occasion; and what action the police authorities have taken in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The police authorities have ascertained that on 22nd December a party of about 100 men assembled at Baunraugh for the ostensible purpose of playing hurley, but that after playing a few minutes they proceeded to level about 170 yards of a stone fence on Mr. Mahoney's farm. So far as the police have been able to ascertain, only two of the party were in the employment of Lord Gough. The police have been unable to obtain evidence which would justify proceedings in the case.

Shooting Outrage in County Galway.

Mr. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that Captain the Hon. J. Campbell, eldest son of Lord Stratheden and Campbell, when out cock-shooting with three others on his property in Moycullen, County Galway, on the 6th instant, deliberately shot dead five or six goats, the property of his tenants; whether in this outrage he was aided by a Mr. De Caen, whose father was recently appointed a magistrate for the district; whether the police have reported this outrage to the authorities; and, if so, what steps will be taken to punish the perpetrators.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The police have no direct knowledge of this matter, but they have ascertained on inquiry that the facts are substantially as stated in the Question. It is alleged that the goats, of which there were a large number, were trespassing in Lord Campbell's plantation and doing considerable injury. The case is not, in my opinion, one for criminal proceedings, and it has not been reported as an outrage. Of course the owners of the goats could take civil proceedings if so advised. The police, however, have learnt that Captain Campbell has offered to compensate the owners, and has already given compensation for two of the goats.

M'Cartie O'Leary Estate, Millstreet, Cork.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a number of householders and business people in the town of Millstreet, county Cork, have signed agreements for the purchase of their premises which form a portion of the M'Cartie O'Leary estate; have these purchase agreements been filed with the Estates Commissioners; is he aware that middle landlords in the town have signed agreements in respect of a number of houses to the exclusion of the direct occupiers of them; will he state what facilities will be afforded to the occupying tenants to purchase in each instance; and what steps will be taken to redeem the interests of the middle landlords.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) Agreements for the purchase of holdings on the estate in question were lodged with the Estates Commissioners on 26th July, 1907. The agreements include over forty cases of proposed purchase of plots in the town of Millstreet. The question of the exclusion of sub-tenants will be fully considered by the Estates Commissioners when they come to deal with the estate in its order of priority.

Native Affairs Commission.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the publication in the Natal Government Gazette of 21st January, by the Office of the Colonial Secretary of Natal, of a Report signed by the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs, and dealing with the unanimous findings of the Native Affairs Commission; whether the Report of the Under-Secretary advises Natal legislation pointing to South African federation, and shows that the Governor of Natal does not possess in Zululand the powers vested in the supreme chief by the code of Native Law for Natal proper, unless indeed His Excellency possesses legislative authority in Zululand; whether Sir Charles Saunders, K.C.M.G., Commissioner for Native Affairs in Zululand, in his evidence republished in the Natal newspapers on the same day, shows that over and over again there have been continuous breaches of faith with the Zulus in regard to their land; and whether, in view of the legal difficulties surrounding the situation in Zululand, His Majesty's Government will request the Governor of Natal to report at once upon the subject of the proposed future administration of that province.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Report referred to has been received and contains expressions of opinion such as are stated in the Question. It is not, however, clear what is meant by the reference to the legislative authority of the Governor in Zululand, as Zululand having been annexed to Natal, in whose legislature members from Zululand sit, power to legislate for Zululand would appear to be necessarily restricted to the Parliament of the Colony. The Natal newspaper containing the remarks by Sir Charles Saunders referred to have not yet been received, but I have seen his remarks at page 136 of the volume evidence given before the Native Affairs Commission. The Secretary of State, as at present advised, does not consider that the legal difficulties are such as call for the Report suggested, but a copy of my right hon. friend's Question shall be sent to the Governor for his observations. Sir M. Nathan has been in communication with Ministers on various matters arising out of the Report of the Native Affairs Commission, and will, no doubt, be in a position to deal more confidently with the whole subject after the visit he is now paying to Zululand.

Game Reserves in the East African Protectorate.

SIR C. HILL (Shrewsbury): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it has been decided to reduce the area of the game reserves in the East Africa Protectorate; and, if so, what reserves are affected and what reduction is contemplated.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) No decision has been taken to reduce the area of the game reserves in the East African Protectorate.

Treatment of Juvenile Offenders.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state what are the regulations with regard to the handcuffing and conveyance of juvenile offenders, both before and after conviction, in London, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Bristol.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) When juvenile offenders have to be removed by the prison authorities, the prison regulations prescribe that they shall not be handcuffed, unless there is a good reason to anticipate an attempt to escape or it is necessary on other grounds to make special provision for safe custody, and then only a leather strap is to be used. Special care is always taken to keep juveniles apart from older offenders. As regards the police forces named in the Question, I have ascertained that it is not the practice of any of them to handcuff juvenile offenders either before or after conviction. The mode of conveyance of juvenile offenders in the hands of the police varies in different police jurisdictions, as the local circumstances and requirements necessarily differ. In the Metropolitan Police district the police are instructed that juvenile offenders shall not be conveyed in prison vans, tramcars, or omnibuses, but that cabs shall be hired when necessary. In Liverpool a special omnibus is provided for such offenders, and in Manchester covered conveyances are used. In Leeds juveniles are conveyed to prison as far as possible in a separate compartment of the prison van. It appears to be the general practice, in the case of children who are ordered to be sent to reformatory or industrial schools, for boys to be conveyed there by police officers in plain clothes, and for girls to be accompanied by a female warder or police matron.

Control of Police Stations.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by whom the police stations in England and Wales, not being police stations in the metropolitan area, are controlled; and whether they are subject to inspection by the Prison Commissioners.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Police stations are controlled by the police authority for the area in which they are situated, which in boroughs is the watch committee and in counties the standing joint committee. They are not subject to inspection by the Prison Commissioners, but are inspected by His Majesty's inspectors of constabulary. The results of that inspection are included in the inspectors' annual Reports (Police (England and Wales).

Political Demonstrators.

Mr. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state any precedent for treating political demonstrators as political offenders one year and the same people or their associates as ordinary law breakers for making similar demonstrations the following year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) As I informed my hon. friend on the 3rd of this month, the question in which division a prisoner should be placed is one for the discretion of the magistrate, and the fact of a prisoner being placed in the first division does not of itself afford any ground for regarding him or her, as a political offender.

Deportation of Paupers to Ireland.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that Michael Flannagan, ex-colour sergeant of the 17th Lancers who worked as a moulder in England from 1891 to 18th May, 1907, for the two years, 1898–1900, when he worked in Ireland, has been deported from the West Derby Union, Liverpool, to Lismore Union, where he arrived on the 6th instant; by whose direction has the deportation been carried out, and under what circumstances; is he aware that Michael Flannagan had been admitted to the Sheffield Union hospital in May, 1907, suffering from the effects of an accident which occurred to him while working at his trade as moulder; and will he say why he was removed from that hospital to the West Derby Union.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have made inquiry as to this case. I understand that Flannagan was removed to the Lismore Union by order of justices for the city of Liverpool on the complaint of the guardians of the West Derby Union. I am informed that he had been admitted to the workhouse of that union on the 30th August last from the vagrant wards, that he left on 12th September, and returned through the vagrant wards on the 8th ultimo. He appears in the meantime to have been tramping about the country. It is stated that he has been moving about England and Scotland for several years, but that his wife and family reside in Cappoquin, county Waterford. I understand that he was not sent to the West Derby Union from Sheffield.

Burial Regulations.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, under what circumstances burial is permitted previous to the registration of death.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) It may be stated generally that the registration of the death is not necessary before burial takes place. Sec. 17 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act, 1874, and Sec. 11 of The Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880, contain provisions on the subject, and it will be seen from them that where there is either an order of a coroner authorising burial or a certificate of a registrar that he has registered or received notice of the death, the order or certificate must be delivered to the person conducting the funeral service or responsible for the burial. If no such order or certificate is delivered to this person, he must give notice of the burial to the registrar.

Bognor Urban District Councillor.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the case of a solicitor who, as a member of the Bognor Urban District Council, sat and voted on the council when a scheme in which he was professionally interested was being considered; and, if so, what action he has taken, or will take, in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have received a letter on this subject, but the matter is not one with respect to which I have any jurisdiction. I do not express any opinion as to the present case; but I may say that where a councillor has become disqualified the disqualification takes effect without any action on my part.

Municipal Accounts.

MR. BRODIE: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has any information as to the probability of the publication of Vol. II. of the Report of the Committee on the Standardising of Municipal Accounts.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My hon. friend is under a misapprehension in this matter. Vol. II. of the Report was published in August last. I will send him a copy.

Trade Statistics.

MR. ERSKINE (Perthshire, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the values of imports and exports of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the German Empire, and France, for each of the years 1902 to 1906, inclusive, distinguishing separately the imports and exports of food, raw materials, and manufactures.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The following statements, which have been compiled from the official Trade Returns of the countries referred to, give the information desired by my hon. friend. I have to point out, however, that material differences exist in the methods of classification of imports and exports adopted by the respective countries, and that the results for particular categories are therefore not absolutely comparable.

Statements showing for the years 1902 to 1906, inclusive, the Values of the Imports for Home Consumption and Exports of Domestic Produce into and from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, and France, distinguishing separately the Imports and Exports of (*a*) Food, (*b*) Raw Materials, and (*c*) Manufactures:—

I.—Imports for Home Consumption.

Years.	United Kingdom*	United States (Years ended 30th June.)	Germany.†	France.
	Million pounds.	Million pounds.	Million pounds.	Million pounds.
(a) Food.				
1902	213·6	43·7	96·8	32·7
1903	221·3	47·5	96·0	38·5
1904	219·7	50·8	96·2	32·7
1905	219·3	59·1	115·2	32·9
1906	226·2	56·1	113·8	37·6
(b) Raw Materials.				
1902	130·8	60·2	125·9	111.9
1903	133·1	66·0	139·8	120·8
1904	143·0	64·0	156·7	114·1
1905	144·3	78·7	170·0	123·5
1906	164·1	83·7	198·3	147·5
(c) Manufactures.				
1902	115·9	77·7	54·2	31·2
1903	116·6	93·2	59·4	32·8
1904	115·9	85·0	60·0	33·3
1905	121·6	88·0	65·3	34·7
1906	130·4	180·4	82·3	40·0
(d) Total.				
1902	462·6‡	182·8§	276·9	175·8
1903	473·0‡	207·9§	295·1	192·1
1904	480·7‡	201·2§	312·9	180·1
1905	487·2‡	227·2§	350·5	191·1
1906	522·8‡	250·1§	394·4	225·1

* Net imports, *i.e.*, total imports, less re-exports.

† The particulars given relate to the German Zollgebiet, which includes Luxemburg.

‡ Includes parcels post and miscellaneous and unclassified articles valued at 2·2 million pounds in 1902, 2·1 million pounds in 1903, 2·1 million pounds in 1904, 2·1 million pounds in 1905, and 2·2 million pounds in 1906.

§ Includes miscellaneous and unclassified articles, valued at 1·2 million pounds in 1902, 1·2 million pounds in 1903, 1·4 million pounds in 1904, 1·4 million pounds in 1905, and 1·9 million pounds in 1906.

II.—Exports of Domestic Produce.

Years.	United Kingdom.	United States (Years ended 30th June).	Germany.*	France.
	Million pounds.	Million pounds.	Million pounds.	Million pounds.
		(*a*) Food.		
1902	17·1	107·0	21·0	28·3
1903	16·3	105·9	25·1	26·5
1904	16·9	92·6	25·8	27·7
1905	19·4	83·6	24·9	31·2
1906	21·1	109·3	28·0	28·5
		(*b*) Raw Materials.		
1902	35·3	77·8	57·1	46·8
1903	36·1	85·1	60·2	47·0
1904	36·2	96·2	61·8	48·8
1905	36·3	98·5	68·9	53·5
1906	43·3	104·3	68·3	59·0
		(*c*) Manufactures.		
1902	226·9	94·6	151·9	95·0
1903	234·1	97·5	161·3	96·6
1904	243·3	109·0	169·2	101·5
1905	269·1	127·4	188·0	109·9
1906	305·5	142·9	216·3	123·2
		(*d*) Total.		
1902	283·4†	282·4‡	230·0	170·1
1903	290·8†	290·0‡	246·6	170·1
1904	300·7†	299·0‡	256·8	178·0
1905	329·8†	310·8‡	281·8	194·7
1906	375·6†	357·9‡	312·6	210·6

* The particulars given relate to the German Zollgebiet, which includes Luxemburg.

† Includes parcel post and miscellaneous and unclassified articles valued at 4·2 million pounds in 1902, 4·3 million pounds in 1903, 4·3 million pounds in 1904, 5·0 million pounds in 1905, and 5·7 million pounds in 1906.

‡ Includes miscellaneous and unclassified articles valued at 3·0 million pounds in 1902, 1·5 million pounds in 1903, 1·2 million pounds in 1904, 1·3 million pounds in 1905, and 1·4 million pounds in 1906.

Wage Tables.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, when it is proposed to complete the preliminary and partial tables of the course of money wages in the United Kingdom and principal foreign countries on Page 275 of the Fiscal Blue-book; and whether he can state, meanwhile, the index numbers for the years after 1900 for the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The index numbers for the United Kingdom for the years 1901–7 are as follows:—

1901 - - - -	98·6
1902 - - - -	97·0
1903 - - - -	96·2
1904 - - - -	95·6
1905 - - - -	95·9
1906 - - - -	97·6
1907 - - - -	101·8

A good deal of information as to wages in foreign countries has been obtained since the issue of the Blue-book referred to, and the results of later inquiries will be published in due course.

Great Northern and Great Central Agreement.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what powers has the Board of Trade, with respect to sanction or amendment of such agreements for working as that proposed by the Great Northern and Great Central Railways, to safeguard the interests of the public and of the traders; whether it will be necessary to confirm that particular agreement by a Bill in Parliament; and what steps is the Board taking in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) The special Act of 1858, under which the agreement between the Great Northern and Great Central Railway Companies purports to be made, required that agreements under the Act should be approved by the Board of Trade, but the powers of the Board in regard to working agreements under special Acts were transferred to the Railway Commissioners (now the Railway and Canal Commission) by the Regulation of Railways Act, 1873. The agreement does not require confirmation by Parliament. The Board have lodged certain objections before the Commission, and the hearing has been fixed by the Commission for the 26th instant.

Grays Dock Bill.

MR. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a statement has been made to the effect that the proposals of the promoters of the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill have been submitted to the Board of Trade, and that they will be recommended to the House as offering the cheapest and most practicable solution of the problem; and whether the promoters of this private Bill have any authority for making a statement as to the views of the Government in this important matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) I have seen a newspaper paragraph, but the promoters of the Bill inform me that no statement to the effect indicated in the Question has been made by them or with their authority. The proposals in question have been submitted to the Board of Trade, but there is no foundation for any statement as to the views entertained by the Government thereon.

Unemployment in Germany.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the percentage of members of trade unions out of work in Germany, and the corresponding figures for the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Kearley.*) I must refer my hon. friend to the reply given on 7th February to the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets.

Syston Postmen's Wages.

MR. WALKER (Leicestershire, Melton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that as long ago as November, 1906, Mr. G. E. Kilby, an auxiliary postman at Syston, Leicestershire, applied for an increase of pay, showing that the wages he was receiving were lower than they should have been considering the number of hours worked; that no reply has been made to that application; and that, as the work on

Mr. Kilby's walk increased to a sufficient extent to justify it being made into an established post, Mr. Kilby made an application for appointment under the regulation which provides that where the work on an auxiliary's walk grows a claim to appointment is admitted for the auxiliary concerned, and that this has been unsuccessful, and whether he will inquire into the case.

(*Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I find that instructions were given in May last to pay to Mr. Kilby arrears of wages to which he was entitled, but I regret that, owing to some misunderstanding, as to which I am making further inquiry, the sum due has not so far been paid. The matter shall, however, receive attention forthwith. It is clearly stated in the conditions of engagement that auxiliary postmen have no title to promotion to established positions, and there is no regulation that where the work on an auxiliary's walk grows he acquires a claim to appointment. Full consideration was, however, given to Mr. Kilby's application when the established post at Syston was created, but as there were assistant postmen and telegraph messengers in the district with long service and claims to appointment, it was notpracticable to give him the post. It was, however, found possible to give him another auxiliary duty with slightly higher wages than he had been receiving.

Discharges from the Mount Pleasant Factory.

Mr. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central): To ask the Postmaster-General if men in Mount Pleasant Factory with from three and a half to eight and a half years service are now being discharged and men with less service retained; and would he be prepared to transfer these men to some other Department, so that their service may not be broken.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The men to whom the hon. Member refers were employed in the battery shop and have, I regret to say, had to be discharged because, owing to the extended use of secondary batteries, the work in the battery shop has fallen off largely. As far as possible the men with least service have been discharged. I much regret that, though every endeavour was made, no other work could be found for them. The number so discharged is four.

Special Telegraph Wires.

Mr. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether, seeing that Clause 16 of the Telegraph Act, 1868, after providing that the special use of a telegraph wire might be granted for a period of twelve hours per diem at a sum not exceeding £500 per annum, expressly provided that no undue priority or preference in respect of such rates should be given to one person over any other such occupier, and that Mr. Fawcett and Lord Eversley, when Postmasters-General, laid it down that the meaning of this clause was that the Post Office should carry on the business of transmitting news messages, and that certain newspaper proprietors have complained that postal administrators have recently given preference to the wealthier newspapers, he intends to hand over, to a much greater degree, the transmission of news telegrams over public wires loaned by private individuals, and thus set aside the Telegraph Act of 1868.

Mr. JOWETT: To ask the Postmaster-General, whether the members of a Departmental Committee have reported that they see no objection to handing over the transmission of news telegrams from London to the provinces to private individuals, with power to loan public wires and supply their own operators; whether permanent servants of the Crown have the power to set aside public rights acquired by purchase and embodied in an Act of Parliament by administration only; whether the Committee recommends to newspaper proprietors that the whole field of Post Office pensioners is open for the recruitment of operators; and whether he is prepared to permit so large an extension of the practice of sub-contracting without making any stipulations regarding the wages or working conditions of telegraphists who are to staff public wires loaned to newspaper syndicates or news agencies.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will answer these two Questions together.

Representations were made to my by various newspaper proprietors and by the Press Association, with a view to seeing whether any arrangements mutually advantageous and satisfactory to the Department and the Press could be entered into whereby a more rapid and efficient service could be given to the Press, the object held principally in view being to reduce, as far as possible, the necessary consumption of time in the reception, manipulation, and transmission of Press messages. The chief suggestion was a scheme of joint private wires on the analogy of the private wires which some of the newspapers already possess. The hon. Member appears to be unaware that the Postmaster-General has provided private wires for private individuals ever since the transfer of the telegraphs to the State. There are some 4,000 of such private wires and, where the renters of private wires employ staff, they always engage and pay their own staff. As regards the question of the proposed joint private wires, no arrangement has yet been come to. The conditions under which they should be granted, including the conditions of service of the wires where these are not staffed by the Post Office, are still under consideration. No priority or preference has been given to any newspaper proprietor in respect of the rates referred to in Section 16 of the Telegraph Act of 1868, or any other rates. I do not see that that section is in any way set aside by the proposal which I have under consideration for allowing newspapers and news agencies, like other undertakings, to rent private wires. It will be equally open to anyone who desires to apply for a special wire, a private wire, or a joint private wire. Permanent servants of the Crown, have, of course, no power such as that suggested. Their duty is to advise the Postmaster-General when, as in this case, they are called upon to do so. The power of decision rests with him alone.

Scottish Telegraph Store Depot Accounts.

Mr. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Postmaster-General, whether his attention has been drawn to the Report of the Public Accounts Committee, stating that in the financial year 1905–6 accounts had been adjusted at Edinburgh and Glasgow telegraph store depots in order to effect an agreement, as far as possible, between expenditure and the authorised estimate for each individual work; and what action he has taken with reference to this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The facts were not quite as would appear from the Report of the Public Accounts Committee. The Comptroller and Auditor-General had reported cases in which wages and travelling expenses had been charged to wrong works, but I did not find that the errors were due to any improper motive, or that there had been any intention of manipulating the accounts in the manner suggested in the Committee's Report, nor was any such suggestion made by the Comptroller and Auditor-General in the case of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The errors in these cases appeared to be due to want of care. Attention was called to the errors at the time, and the officers in fault expressed their regret; but I did not consider that disciplinary notice was necessary at either Edinburgh or Glasgow.

Corn Market Returns.

Mr. FELL: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what was the total quantity of wheat in 1907 returned under the Corn Returns Act, as being sold on the London market; and what proportion this bears to the estimated total consumption of wheat in the London area.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The total quantity of wheat returned under The Corn Returns Act, 1882, as purchased at Mark Lane in 1907, was 128,140 quarters. The total consumption of wheat in the London area is not a matter in regard to which precise statistics are available.

Wheat Prices in London.

Mr. FELL: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the average difference of price in London between British wheat and all kinds of imported wheat.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) In 1907, the average price per quarter of British wheat in London, as ascertained under The Corn Returns Act, 1882, was 31s. 7d. and the average value of wheat imported into London was 32s. 11d., a difference of 1s. 4d.

Advances for Small Holdings.

MR. BRODIE: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, in view of Sub-section 4 of Section 39 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907, the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries will make grants or advances to societies having for one of their objects the provision or profitable working of small holdings or allotments, in addition to grants made to such societies by county councils.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board have no power to make grants or advances to societies of the character of those to which my hon. friend refers. They can only give financial assistance to societies having as their object, or one of their objects, the promotion of co-operation in connection with the cultivation of small holdings or allotments.

Agricultural Advances in the Colonies.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to the Acts recently passed in the Cape of Good Hope, the Transvaal, Natal, and Western Australia, for assisting agriculture by money advances at low rates of interest from the Colonial Governments, through the instrumentality of credit banks or mortgage bonds; and whether the Board of Agriculture will consider the advisability of establishing machinery of the same kind for existing agriculture and especially co-operative agricultural associations in this country.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) We published a brief summary of the provisions of the Acts to which my hon. friend refers in our Journal this month. I shall be glad to send him a copy, and to consider the suggestion he makes in the latter part of his Question.

Argentine Cattle Industry

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that the Argentine has, owing to the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, refused to admit cattle exported from Scotland to her ports; and whether he can assure the House that every possible precaution has been taken to prevent the spread of the disease to England.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Answer to both Questions is in the affirmative.

Weir Charity Fund.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): To ask the hon. Member for the Elland Division, as Charity Commissioner whether the Charity Commissioners have received a petition, signed by 13,699 persons above the age of eighteen years residing in the parish of Streatham, protesting against the proposed application of the fund of the Weir charity to the Bolingbroke Hospital, as not being in accordance with the intention of the testator; and what steps the Charity Commissioners propose to take with regard to the Benjamin Weir bequest.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) The Charity Commissioners have received a petition from residents in the parish of Streatham to the effect stated by the hon. Member. The terms of a scheme for the future administration of the Weir Charity are now under consideration by the Commissioners, and a draft of the proposed scheme will be published in the locality in due course.

Prevention of Corruption Act.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether any prosecutions have taken place under The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1906; and whether any manufacturers, merchants, or others have volunteered any information to the Crown with the object of having proceedings taken against persons contravening this Act.

(*Answered by Sir W. Robson.*) Eight applications have been made for the Attorney-General's fiat for prosecutions under The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1906. Fiats have been granted and convictions obtained in seven of these cases; one case is at present under consideration.

Waterford Magistracy.

MR. O'SHEE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the resolution passed by the Lismore rural council on the 7th instant, with reference to the action of the magistrates at Lismore petty sessions, has come under the notice of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland; whether, in view of the facts referred to, and the resolutions of other public bodies in the county Waterford calling for the appointment of additional magistrates, the Lord Chancellor will take steps accordingly; and whether, as the Lord-Lieutenant of the county is the Duke of Devonshire, who resides in the county for not more than two or three weeks yearly, the Lord Chancellor will consider the appointment of additional magistrates by virtue of his own authority.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I have referred this Question to the Lord Chancellor who has furnished me with the following reply: A copy of a resolution passed by the Lismore rural district council on the 7th instant was transmitted to the Lord Chancellor, asking him to appoint additional magistrates in that district on the ground that the magistrates sitting at petty sessions, presided over by the resident magistrate, had refused to grant a decree against a tenant of a cottage who was sued by the collector of the council. The magistrates appear to have acted within their judicial discretion, and the Lord Chancellor cannot interfere with its exercise. There are, besides the resident magistrate, eleven justices attending the Lismore petty sessions. The Lord Chancellor is always ready to consider the appointment of magistrates whenever necessary, and the names of several persons suggested for appointment to the bench have been sent to the Duke of Devonshire by the Lord Chancellor, and he believes that the Duke will deal with them as soon as he returns to England, which it is hoped will be at an early date.

Irish Game Laws.

MR. O'SHEE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that prosecutions for trespass in pursuit of game in Ireland are brought under a Statute passed in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of George III., and that, under this Statute, any stranger having no immediate interest in the matter can maintain a prosecution against any person who is traversing lands in the possession of any other person, and appearing to be in the pursuit of game; whether he is aware that heavy penalties are usually inflicted, and that John Campion was fined on the 1st instant, by a majority of the bench at Lismore petty sessions, £2 for being on the lands of John O'Farrell, a judicial tenant of the Duke of Devonshire, on 8th January, accompanied by two greyhounds, in a prosecution by the duke's gamekeeper; and whether he will consider the advisability of an alteration in the game laws.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I am informed that the prosecution was not under the Act of George III., but under 27 and 28 Vic., c. 67. which provides that when a landlord has reserved to himself the exclusive right to game on any land he shall be deemed the legal occupier of such land for the purposes of that Act. It may be inferred from the fact that the Duke of Devonshire was the prosecutor in this case that the game rights are reserved to him in respect of the holding purchased by John O'Farrell under the Lands Acts. It is the fact that Campion was fined the full penalty of £2. I am informed that he had been fined 10s. for a similar offence, at the prosecution of the Duke of Devonshire, in the previous month. The Government do not contemplate any legislation for amending the game laws in Ireland.

Brown Linen Hall, Belfast.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-

Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the sale of the Brown Linen Hall, Donegall Street, Belfast, for the sum of £1,050; and whether, in view of the fact that the premises known as the Brown Linen Hall form one of the few remaining relics of old Belfast, and one intimately and honourably associated with the staple trade and the history of the city he will take steps to secure its preservation as a national monument.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The Board of Works can only take charge of ancient or mediæval buildings if the owners propose to hand them over, and they inform me that no such proposal has been made in this case. Even if it were made, the Board state that they could not accept it, since this building (apart from the question of its date) has no architectural features, and its antiquarian interest is not of a national but only of a local character.

Bawnboy Rural District Council.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received a resolution from the Bawnboy Rural District Council dealing with the repayment of advances made for the purchase of seed potatoes; and will he say if the prayer of the resolution will be acceded to.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The resolution has been received. It requests the Government to give the seed loan free of interest, or in the alternative to give a grant in-aid. I would refer to the reply to the Question put by the hon. Member for South Leitrim on the 18th instant. The Department of Agriculture have considered the question of making a grant, and have decided not to make any grant this year.

Nobber Evicted Tenant.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the lengthened period that the application of Francis Hopkins, Nobber, county Meath, for reinstatement in his former holding has been before the Estates Commissioners and that the farm from which he was evicted is still on the hands of the landlord, Colonel Lyster Smythe, they will consider his case at the earliest possible moment.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners have nothing to add to the reply which was given on the 18th instant to the hon. Member's Question on this subject.

Rifle Clubs.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is contemplating giving any financial aid to those clubs inspected and passed by his Department and which are imparting instruction on the handling and use of the rifle.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.* The reply is in the negative. There are no funds for the present at my disposal for this purpose.

Michael Flannagan, late of the 17th Lancers.

MR. O'SHEE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Michael Flannagan, a native of Cappoquin, county Waterford, served in the 17th Lancers from 1873 to 1891, and attained the rank of colour-sergeant; will he say whether he passed an examination qualifying him for a commission in the Army; under what circumstances did he leave the Army; and what was the name of the colonel of the 17th Lancers at the time Michael Flannagan left the regiment.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The cavalry records for the period in question have been searched, but no trace can be found of the man mentioned.

Royal Military College, Sandhurst.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that the new regulations in force as to admission to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst bear hardly in some cases with regard to the age limit; that, in effect, the rule by which the earliest limit of age for admission was raised from seventeen to eighteen operates in numerous cases to extend the earliest age when a cadet can pass out to twenty or even more; that candidates born in June and December cannot possibly enter the college until they are considerably over eighteen and a-half years of age, and must wait nearly six months after their eighteenth birthday before they are allowed to present themselves for examination; and that in consequence class fellows below a cadet in class, but a few days older, may get their commissions six months before him and take precedence of him all through the service; and whether he will consider the possibility of favouring the entry of university candidates without discouraging that of candidates from other sources.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The effect of raising the age limit for entrance to the Royal Military College from seventeen to eighteen years was carefully considered before the issue of the regulations now in force. In order to give an equal number of opportunities, with a half-yearly competitive examination, no matter what age limit is fixed, there must always be a difference of seniority among candidates whose birthdays happen to be near the governing dates. Besides approximating the age of Sandhurst cadets to that of candidates from the universities, there were other objects in view when the age limit was raised, *e.g.*—(*a*) To enable cadets being older on entry to derive greater benefit from the Royal Military College course; (*b*) To ensure that officers were not too young on joining their regiments for service in India and elsewhere abroad.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Pacific Islanders' Protection Act.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if amending legislation connected with the Pacific Islanders Protection Act will be introduced this session.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): No, Sir.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Then do I understand that the Government maintains a condition of slavery under the British flag?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am not aware there is any such condition of slavery established in these Islands. If the hon. Member has any information showing that I shall be glad to receive it.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Is it not the case that last session the Government announced that such an Act would be necessary under the Convention?

MR. CHURCHILL: The object of the Convention was to prevent improper conditions of labour prevailing under the British flag, and that will be fully carried out.

Floggings in Natal.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies with regard to the five men who were recently flogged in Natal, whether he can furnish the House with the dates upon which these punishments were inflicted, the places in which they were inflicted, the names of those who passed the sentences, and of all those present by official authority at the execution of the same.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Governor of Natal has telegraphed as follows—"The floggings all took place at Nongoma, the first on 10th December, the others between 12th December and 20th December. Sentences passed by McKenzie and the floggings were administered by the gaoler, Nongoma prison. No further floggings have taken place, but it has been reported that a native was assaulted in the Babanango district by a trooper, and an inquiry on the matter is being held." I have no further information on this particular point, but meanwhile I am glad to be able to add that the Governor has stated that during his tour in Zululand the native chiefs and others who have come to see him and were able to speak freely with him, have made no reference to any harsh treatment under martial law. I should like to add that the Governor of

Natal has informed the Government that he has just signed a warrant for the release of 1,587 men who were imprisoned for participation in the 1906 rebellion. This step has been taken by the desire and on the initiation of the Natal Government.

Cable Communication with the West Indies.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies when the results of the inquiry of the Departmental Committee on Cable Communications in the West Indies will be published.

MR. CHURCHILL: The recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Telegraphic Communication in the West Indies are under consideration, and the Secretary of State cannot at present make any statement or say whether papers can be laid before Parliament on the subject.

In reply to a further Question by the hon. Member——

MR. CHURCHILL said the Report had been presented to the Secretary of State, and a copy of it had been published in one of the Colonies.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: Will the Government consider the propriety of publishing it?

MR. CHURCHILL: No doubt that will eventually be done.

Nairobi Expedition.

SIR SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether an expedition has been sent from Nairobi to put down an alleged rising of the natives in British East Africa; if he can say what is the extent and character of this rising, and its causes; what are the precise objects of the expedition in question, and what force is likely to be employed; and generally whether Parliament can be supplied with further information on the whole subject.

MR. CHURCHILL: On 11th January Mr. Northcote, one of the Assistant District Commissioners of the Protectorate, was attacked by natives at Kisii and wounded by a spear. Subsequently several clans in the neighbourhood broke out in open revolt and two Indians and one Kavirondo were murdered. Fifty police and a doctor were despatched as soon as possible to the spot, and were followed by three companies of the King's African Rifles. The operations were not of a serious nature and came to an end on 6th February. One company and two officers were to remain at Kisii, and the rest of the force was to return to Nairobi on 12th February.

Recruiting Indentured Labour in Madagascar.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Transvaal Government propose to arrange for the recruiting of indentured labourers from the Island of Madagascar; whether any labourers have been recruited from the Island of Madgascar; and whether the Transvaal Government has negotiated direct with the French Government on the subject.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Transvaal Government desire to ascertain whether the French Government will sanction the recruiting of native labour in Madagascar for employment in the Transvaal mines. No recruiting has taken place. Nor is the Transvaal Government negotiating direct with the French Government.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked what reply the Government had given to the representations of the Transvaal Government.

MR. CHURCHILL: I really do not understand what representations the hon. Gentleman is referring to. The Transvaal Government have asked us to do certain things, and we are making inquiries to see whether we can do them or not.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) asked the right hon. Gentleman if he could lay the communications which had passed on the Table, as that would give the hon. Member the information asked for.

MR. CHURCHILL: The right hon. Gentleman knows I have no authority to say upon my own account what Papers shall or shall not be laid on the Table; but if a Question in that sense is put down I will bring it to the notice of my noble friend.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Are we to understand that the Transvaal Government has discovered that there are not sufficient natives for the Transvaal mines and are going to Madagascar to get them?

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot draw the inferences from the facts which the hon. Member suggests.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: When will the right hon. Gentleman consider the question of laying Papers.

MR. CHURCHILL: When the correspondence is complete.

The Ransom of Mr. Robert Abbott.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the ransom of £15,000 paid to the brigands at Smyrna for the release of Mr. Robert Abbott has been recovered from the Turkish Government; if not, what steps are being taken to obtain payment.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The larger part of the ransom paid for Mr. Abbott's release is now in the hands of the Ottoman Government, having been recovered from the brigands. Sir N. O'Conor was recently instructed to request that it may be handed over to His Majesty's Government forthwith. The question of the best means of recovering the remainder of the money is now under consideration.

SIR GILBERT PARKER asked if His Majesty's Government were holding the Turkish Government responsible for the amount?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I should like notice of the Question.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): How much was got back from the brigands?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I think £9,000 has been recovered from them.

Russia, Sweden and the Aland Islands.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that alarm has been occasioned in Sweden by the report of Russia's intention to demand release from her treaty obligations in regard to the fortification or permanent military or naval occupation of the Aland Islands; whether any representations have been made by Russia proposing the abrogation of the treaty of 1856; and what is the attitude of His Majesty's Government upon this question.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any representations have been received by His Majesty's Government from the Russian Government regarding the position in the Aland Islands and the continuance of the Aland Treaty; and, if so, whether he is prepared to make any statement on the subject.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): May I also ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether his attention has been called to the political unrest in Sweden occasioned by the negotiations said to be pending between Great Britain and the other signatories of the Treaty of Paris of a nature likely to affect the position of Sweden in the Baltic; and can he make any reassuring statement which would satisfy the House that Great Britain is making no arrangement which would be disadvantageous to a friendly Power.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am aware that anxiety on this subject has found public expression in Sweden. The Treaty referred to is one to which Great Britain, France, and Russia are parties, and I can make no statement about any negotiations concerning it except that it is not at the present moment necessary for His Majesty's Government to come to any decision about it. If, and when, this is necessary, we shall of course consult with both the other parties to the Treaty, and take into account the feeling of Sweden and every other circumstance which is relevant, before coming to any decision.

Macedonia.

Mr. **MITCHELL - THOMSON**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British proposal for the employment of *gendarmerie* in pursuit of Macedonian bands has been abandoned in its present form; and, if so, for what reason.

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: I would ask the hon. Member to await a statement on the whole subject of Macedonia, which I propose to make on the 25th instant.

Disturbances at Tabriz.

Major **ANSTRUTHER-GRAY**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any report has reached him with regard to the recent disturbances at Tabriz.

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: According to the latest report received from His Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* at Tehran, a fight broke out at Tabriz on 17th January between the revolutionaries and some roughs. Fighting lasted for two days, and twenty people were killed or wounded. Intermittent fighting continued until the end of the month, when cavalry and infantry were posted in the town to keep order, and tranquillity was restored.

*Mr. **BOWLES** (Lambeth, Norwood) asked if there was any information to show that Russia had recently sent troops to Tabriz.

Sir **EDWARD GREY** asked for notice.

Baggage Robberies on Continental Lines.

Sir **BERKELEY SHEFFIELD** (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the frequent robberies on the Paris, Lyon, and Mediterranean Railway from the luggage of British travellers; and whether, owing to the ineffectual attempts made to obtain redress from the company, he will instruct His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris to make a formal representation on the subject to the French Government.

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: The attention of His Majesty's Government has been called to the matter, and I will communicate with His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris as to the circumstances.

Sir **BERKELEY SHEFFIELD** asked if any representations would be made to the Italian Government?

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: I did not say I would make representations, but that I would communicate with the British Ambassador at Paris on this subject.

Mr. **ALEXANDER CROSS** (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked if the British Ambassador would be asked to make representations and if it was not the duty of the Foreign Office to look after the interests of British subjects.

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: Yes, Sir; and that is the reason why I am going to communicate with the Ambassador at Paris; but what the hon. Member asked me was that I should make a formal representation to a foreign Government on the subject of its own railway, a very improper subject for representation.

Mr. **ALEXANDER CROSS**: No, I did not mean that. I thought the British Ambassador might be asked if he thought representations were desirable to be made.

Arbitration Treaty with the United States.

Mr. **LONSDALE**: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the negotiations with the United States with reference to the conclusion of an arbitration treaty have reached a stage that will permit him to make an announcement on the subject.

Sir **EDWARD GREY**: The negotiations are proceeding, but it would be premature for the moment to make any further statement on the subject.

Kaid Maclean.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Kaid Maclean has left Morocco for good; and has the Government received any promise that he will not return there except with the permission of the Government.

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's Government have no information of the future movements of Kaid Maclean, who, as the hon. Member is no doubt aware, is in the service of the Sultan of Morocco.

MR. FELL: May I ask if the Kaid still remains a British subject, or if, when he entered the service of the Government of Morocco, he lost his rights as a Briton?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I must ask for notice, but I may point out that in Morocco there is extra-territorial jurisdiction.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Is Raisuli a British subject?

SIR EDWARD GREY: No, but he will be under British protection so long as he conducts himself satisfactorily.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has any prospect of recovering from any quarter the money paid for the release of Kaid Maclean.

SIR EDWARD GREY: By a Shereefian Firman received in December last at His Majesty's Legation at Tangier, the Moorish Government have formally recognised their liability in respect of the sum advanced by His Majesty's Government for the release of Sir Harry Maclean.

Brewery Debenture Holders Committee.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he proposes to take any steps to prevent the officials of his Department from joining the Brewery Debenture Holders Committee, being a committee formed to protect the pecuniary interests of the holders of debentures secured upon breweries.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): No, Sir; I have no reason to think that any Home Office official would wish to join that committee. I may add with reference to the Question asked last Monday by my hon. friend the Member for Lincoln, that the Chief Constable of West Sussex has withdrawn his name from the list of the local Brewery Debenture Holders Committee in which it appeared.

MR. FELL: Do I understand that this committee is not, in the opinion of the Home Office, a political organisation?

MR. GLADSTONE: I do not see how that arises out of the Question.

Boiler Examination.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case heard at the Portadown petty sessions, on Monday 10th February, 1908, in which Mr. Williams, inspector of factories, prosecuted a local firm for failing to have the boiler used in their works examined and to register the report of the examination; whether, although this was the third prosecution against the firm for a similar offence and the inspector pressed for the full penalty, the magistrates only inflicted a fine of £3; whether he has any official reports bearing out the statement of the inspector that there is no part of the country where this provision of the Factory and Workshop Act is so much neglected as in Ulster, and that the neglect is due to the triviality of the fines inflicted by the magistrates; and whether, in view of all the facts of the case, and of the danger to the lives of employees involved in the neglect of the provisions of the Act by the employers he will issue instructions to the inspectors in Ulster to devote special attention to ensuring that the provisions of the Act in regard to the inspection of boilers are duly enforced.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have obtained a report on this case from the inspector of the district and find that the facts are as stated in the first two paragraphs of the Question. The time at my disposal has been too short to enable me to make any detailed inquiry as to the extent to which neglect of the provision relating to the examination of steam boilers prevails in Ulster, as compared with other industrial districts of the country, or as to the causes of that neglect; but the inspector reports that such neglect is not uncommon; that he is giving very careful attention to the enforcement of the requirements of the Act, and that he had already taken a number of proceedings in court.

Factory and Workshop Accidents.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can give the number of non-fatal accidents reported under the Factory and Workshops Act during 1907; and also the number for the corresponding period of 1906 and that for 1898, with the percentage of increase in each case.

I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can give the number of fatal accidents reported under the Factory and Workshops Act during 1907; also the number for the corresponding period of 1906 and that for 1898, with the percentage of increase in each case.

I beg further to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can give the total number of fatal accidents and the total number of non-fatal accidents reported under the Factory and Workshops Act during the ten years 1898 to 1907.

MR. GLADSTONE: The statistics of accidents for which the hon. Member asks will be found in the Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories, and in the preliminary Tables of accidents and cases of industrial poisoning just published (Cd. 3925). As regards percentages, the number of fatal accidents has increased by 5½ per cent. as compared with the year 1906, and by 56 per cent. as compared with the year 1898. For non-fatal accidents the corresponding figures are 11 per cent. and 116 per cent. These increases are due partly to the increase in the number of persons employed in factories (about 100,000 a year), and to the extended use of machinery; and partly to closer inspection, and to the more complete reporting of accidents. This last cause affects very largely the returns of non-fatal accidents and also to some extent the returns of fatal accidents, the greatest increase in the latter class being in docks and buildings, where in the year 1898 the reporting even of fatal accidents was still far from complete. These increases are a matter of grave concern to me, and I shall soon be in a position to make a statement on the subject.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON: May I ask whether, in view of the alarming increase in the number of fatal and non-fatal accidents, the Government will consider the desirability of giving us an opportunity of discussing this matter? It is one on which we feel very strongly.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): If the hon. Member will put down a Question, I will answer it on Monday.

Socialism in the Post Office.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the Pioneer Socialist League has for its objects the propagation of the principles of Socialism, its field being primarily the *personnel* of the various postal services from which its membership is drawn; whether he is aware that the Pioneer Socialist League has received the thanks of certain successful Socialist candidates for Parliament for contributions towards their election expenses, and that it calls upon its members, as their duty, to subscribe to its war chest funds; and whether, in view of these facts, he will consider the advisability of refusing to allow this organisation to continue in the postal service.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The existing regulations governing the action of postal servants as civil servants are shortly as follows. That they are to exercise a certain reserve in political matters; and it is specifically stated that they may not serve on a committee having for its object to promote or prevent the return of a particular candidate to Parliament, nor support or oppose any particular candidate or party either by public speaking or writing. Mr. Gladstone, as First Lord of the Treasury, in 1893 laid it down that "the only restriction by the custom of the public service on persons employed is that persons in the permanent employment of the State shall not take a prominent or active part in political contests, and it is not intended in future that any other restrictive rule should be imposed on the service of the Post Office." No attempt has, as far as I am aware, been made to prohibit civil servants from subscribing individually or collectively to such objects as they think fit. As regards the particular society in question, I understand that last autumn it was decided to incorporate it in the Civil Service Socialist Society and that this was carried out last month under the constitution of the Civil Service Socialist Society. Political action is expressly stated to be outside its province, and the general funds of the Society are not to be used for any other organisation.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the organ of this society statements were made acknowledging contributions towards the election expenses of Socialist candidates seeking to become Members of this House; and, if that is so, is he not of opinion that the objects of this society are strictly Party ones?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I really cannot add anything to the Answer I have given. I read out the actual regulations that exist in the Post Office, and I must ask the hon. Member to draw his own conclusions from them.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there are two servants of the Post Office who are members of the Manchester City Council and who are avowed Socialists? Will the right hon. Gentleman further say whether the Post Office Socialist organisation has supported the candidature of those two members?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the society has supported the candidates for the Manchester City Council it is entirely within its rights, because that is not prohibited in any way.

*MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the strong public feeling that is growing that the rules of fair play are being transgressed in the application of the Post Office regulations to these associations? The right hon. Gentleman will find evidence in *The Daily Telegraph* to-day.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I should be very sorry if it were thought that I had dealt out different measures of justice to any of these societies. My desire is to deal out even-handed justice.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that contributions were made by this society to the election expenses of the hon. Members for Preston and Colne Valley?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I believe in the organ of the society there was acknowledgment of a contribution of 15s. subscribed for the hon. Member for Colne Valley, but such contributions are not forbidden in the Civil Service.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.): After the right hon. Gentleman's explanation, will he allow a branch of the Primrose League to be established in the Post Office, seeing that it exactly fulfils the conditions under which he has allowed a branch of the Pioneer Socialist League?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said the answer to that was that, having regard to his decision, which was founded on that of his predecessor, those interested in the matter formed another society, with rules which brought them within the regulations of the Post Office.

Post Office Life Insurance.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether a Departmental Committee has been sitting to inquire what steps, if any, should be taken to encourage the use of the present life insurance system of the Post Office; whether the

Committee has considered the advisablity of appointing a specially trained man to manage the life insurance business, the desirability of severing the insurance business from the savings bank system of accounts, and the advantage of the payment of premiums by means of stamps; and will the Report of the Committee be presented to the House of Commons.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Last year I appointed a Departmental Committee, of which Lord Farrer is Chairman, to consider, *inter alia*, "whether it is desirable that steps should be taken to encourage the use of the present life insurance system of the post office; and if so what steps." The Committee has not yet reported. Until their Report is presented to me I am unable to answer the other parts of the hon. Member's Question; which, however, I am forwarding to the Committee.

Billingsgate Post Office Dining Room.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether a room was allocated for an upstairs dining room at the Billingsgate branch office at Christmas, 1907; upon what date the order for the necessary repairs and painting was given; whether only a part of the work was carried out, after which the work was discontinued; and why there has been this delay in carrying out these small but necessary repairs and painting.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think the hon. Member must be under some misapprehension. I am making arrangements to take a fresh lease of the Billingsgate branch office, with the addition of an upper floor, in which retiring accommodation for part of the staff can be provided, but I am not yet in possession of the additional rooms.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Do I understand that although this matter has been in hand since March last, the Department is not yet in possession of the rooms, and that that is the reason for not carrying out the desired improvement.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is not in actual legal possession, and could only make the alterations by an act of courtesy.

Clerkships in the Post Office.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the number of men clerkships in the Post Office is being or has been reduced; whether the number of boy clerkships has been proportionately decreased; whether there has been any reduction in boy clerkships; and whether girls have been or are to be employed to perform duties hitherto performed by boy clerks, or duties which could be performed as well by boy clerks.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No general reduction in the number of male clerks is in contemplation; but at the Savings Bank Department there has been some decrease owing to recent rearrangements. The hon. Gentleman, I think, agrees in the view that the number of boys clerks should be diminished in view of the improbability of finding permanent employment for them all. The duties are assigned to girl clerks where they are suitable, but more girl clerks are not employed than can, if they give satisfaction, be retained in the service as women clerks.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last part of my Question as to whether girls are doing duties which could well be performed by boy clerks.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is so. We desire to diminish, as far as we can, the number of boy clerks. Unfortunately, we cannot find employment for them, and we have to part with them at twenty years of age.

Cycle Postmen's Weights.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that postmen in Manchester are compelled to propel weights ranging up to 123 pounds in carrier tricycles; whether the Post Office are ignoring a regulation which provides that men are not compelled to propel weights exceeding 70 pounds and, if so, whether he can take steps to immediately enforce the regulation.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No definite limit has been laid down for the weight to be conveyed on carrier tricycles in town districts, as it necessarily depends largely upon local circumstances, such as gradients, distances, etc. I am assured that the loads propelled by postmen at Manchester are not excessive and work out at an average of 55 pounds. After a discussion with the Postmen's Federation, I recently instructed the Second Medical Officer of the Post Office to inquire into the whole question of the weight to be carried on carrier tricycles in consultation with a doctor nominated by the Federation. Their inquiry is now in progress.

MR. CLYNES: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider that this is a matter which can be settled on the basis of averages?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I cannot say that, but the question is now under consideration with a committee nominated by the Postmen's Federation. Until I get their Report I can give no undertaking.

Imports of Milk and Cream.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade from what countries fresh milk and cream is imported into this country; and whether satisfactory regulations are in force in the countries of origin providing for the sanitary conditions under which such milk and cream is produced and handled.

The hon. Member also had the following Questions on the Paper:—

To ask the President of the Board of Trade through what ports of entry fresh milk and cream are imported into this country.

To ask the President of the Board of Trade what quantities of fresh milk and cream per week are now entering this country from abroad; and how such quantities compare with those of a year ago.

To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, owing to the rapid increase of imports of fresh milk and cream, and the uncertainty of the sanitary conditions under which such milk and cream is produced, he will make stringent regulations for the inspection and examination of imported milk and cream at the ports of entry.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): Ordinarily the supply of fresh milk from abroad is insignificant, but owing to a shortage in home supplies there has been an exceptional importation during the last few weeks. The quantity of fresh milk imported into this country in the first seven weeks of this year was 697 cwt. as compared with 15 cwt. in the corresponding weeks of last year, whilst of cream the quantity imported was 1,172 cwt. as compared with 690 cwt. The milk is imported from France and landed at Southampton. The cream comes from France, Russia, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Argentine Republic and is landed at London, Harwich, Hull, Newhaven, Newcastle, Southampton, Leith and Grangemouth. The information in my possession is not sufficient to enable me to say how far satisfactory regulations are in force in the countries of origin as to the sanitary conditions under which the milk and cream are produced and handled. I am arranging to have some samples of imported milk examined as to bacterial contamination and presence of dirt and I will give consideration to the subject of regulations in relation both to milk and to cream.

Granite.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether granite is classified in the Board of Trade Returns as a manufactured article or as raw material.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport): Imports and exports of granite are not distinguished separately in the Official Trade Accounts, but they are included in groups which are classified as wholly or mainly manufactured.

MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.) asked if the Birmingham Council had entered into a contract for the supply of Norwegian granite.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of such a Question.

Bass Rock.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the new lighthouse and fog horn on the Bass Rock will be completed.

MR. KEARLEY: The lighthouse is already completed and the fog signal is expected to be in operation in May.

Engine Tenders.

MR. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware of the increase in the working of passenger trains by engines running tender first; whether the provision of weather-boards for tenders meets the reqirements of the Railway Department of his Board; and will he state what recommendations, if any, have been made to the railway companies on the matter.

MR. KEARLEY: When the attention of the Board of Trade has been drawn to cases in which trains are worked by engines running tender first they have communicated with the companies concerned, and have said that the practice is one which they do not regard with favour. Each case is considered on its merits, but as a rule I should say that the provision of weather-boards would not meet all objections. If my hon. friend desires to bring any particular cases to my notice I will have inquiry made.

Waggon Buffers.

MR. HUDSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether there was a clear understanding from the railway companies in the year 1900 that after the ordinary course of life of the dead-buffered waggons then in existence they would be replaced by the modern type of spring-buffered waggons; whether he is aware that during the past two years the London and North Western Railway Company have built several new dead-buffered waggons and placed them in traffic; and whether he will now consider the further increased danger of longer trains and heavier loads of engines, with a view of asking the railway companies to abolish this class of buffer on their rolling stock.

MR. KEARLEY: The Board of Trade are in communication with the London and North Western Railway Company on the subject of my hon. friend's Question and will inform him of the result in due course.

Life Saving on the River Tyne.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the life-saving facilities on the River Tyne are regarded as being inadequate in cases of emergency; and whether he will have steps taken to place the lifeboat service on a more satisfactory basis.

MR. KEARLEY: I am not aware that the life-saving facilities on the Tyne are regarded as inadequate. The question of the lifeboat service is one for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, but if any representations are made to us, we shall be happy to communicate them.

Railway Inquiry.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has taken any steps to inaugurate an inquiry into the railway system of the United Kingdom; and, if so, whether he will state the nature and composition of the committee and the scope and purpose of the inquiry.

MR. KEARLEY: My right hon. friend is not in a position to answer this Question at the moment as stated in the Answer given by him to the hon. Member for Stockport on the 16th. He hopes to be in a position to give a definite answer next week.

Unemployment in New York.

*MR. CHARLES ROBERTS. I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade it he can state the total number of unemployed persons in need of relief in New York city in January, 1908.

MR. KEARLEY: His Majesty's Embassy at Washington reporting on 9th January stated the number of unemployed persons in New York City in need of relief as 125,000.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how many immigrants landed in New York, disturbing the labour market during the same period?

*MR. CHARLES ROBERTS: Can the right hon. Gentleman at the same time say how many emigrants left New York in January, through inability to find work?

[No Answers were returned.]

Norwegian Granite Quarries.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will obtain from His Majesty's consuls in Norway particulars of the wages paid to, and the hours worked by, the workmen engaged in the quarries of granite in Norway which supply the granite used in the Government dockyards.

MR. KEARLEY: I will endeavour to obtain information with regard to wages and hours worked in granite quarries in Norway.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Irish workmen are particularly interested in this matter, seeing that Norwegian granite is being used for the extension works at Haulbowline.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Will the hon. Gentleman include in his inquiry on the question of the rate of wages paid in Norwegian quarries, whether a living wage can be secured for the men employed on the steamers which bring over the granite. Is he aware that the Birmingham Corporation are using this granite instead of English in consequence of its cheapness?

[No Answer was returned.]

Enfield Lock Factory—West's Claim for Compensation.

MR. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been directed to the case of a man named West, recently employed at the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, and injured whilst so employed; whether he has considered the conditions under which this man was discharged, the series of accidents by which he was disabled, and the compensation which he has received; and whether he is willing that West should be examined by Sir Dyce Duckworth so that an accurate report of West's injuries may be obtained, and consideration given to his claim to further compensation.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): Yes, sir, I am well acquainted with the circumstances of this case, and I admit that they are very distressing. I regret, however, that I cannot undertake to adopt the hon. Member's suggestion as the man has received the maximum amount of compensation to which he was entitled, unless it can be shown that his capacity to contribute to his own support has been totally destroyed by his injuries. This, however, can hardly be the case seeing that those injuries did not prevent him from being retained in the service with undiminished wages until he was finally retired in the ordinary course on the ground of age.

Loyal Philanthropic Friendly Society.

MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that a memorial protesting against the transfer of the Loyal Philanthropic Friendly Society to the Royal Liver has been forwarded to the Chief Registrar, on the ground that a material consideration as to the allocation of a sum of £27,000 was withheld prior to the consent of the members being obtained to the proposed transfer; whether he will instruct the Chief Registrar to see that the interests of members are adequately safeguarded before such transfer receives official sanction; and will he say what steps the Chief Registrar is taking to assure himself that the consent of the requisite number of members has been obtained to the transfer.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The Chief Registrar informs me that he only received the memorial this morning, and that he has not had time to examine it. The Friendly Societies Act, 1896, however, contains stringent regulations governing cases like this, and the Chief Registrar, of course, will not register the special resolution required under the Act until he is satisfied that the conditions of the Act have been complied with, nor without giving the memorialists an opportunity of being heard, if they so desire. The hon. Member may therefore rest assured that the interests of all parties will be properly safeguarded.

Aberdeen Fishery Cruisers.

CAPTAIN WARING (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what, if any, precautions are taken by those responsible for the movements of the fishery cruiser from Aberdeen to prevent the knowledge of intended cruises coming to, or being obtained by, the masters or crews of trawlers.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The commanders of cruisers do not communicate any of their instructions to any of the crew before leaving the harbour, and I am advised that there is no reason to suppose that the instructions issued by the Fishery Board as to the movement of their cruisers are divulged.

Illegal Trawling in the Moray Firth.

MR. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can state the number of vessels under a foreign flag that have been reported from the beginning of July, 1907, up to the end of January of this year for trawling in the Moray Firth; how many prosecutions have taken place, and how many convictions have been obtained for the period referred to; and the number of prosecutions now pending.

MR. SINCLAIR: Nineteen different vessels were reported during the period mentioned on seventy-five different occasions. In one of these cases so far has a prosecution been instituted and a conviction obtained, but no prosecutions are pending. Forty-six prosecutions took place early in July for offences committed prior to the beginning of that month, and twenty-nine convictions were obtained, twenty-three of which were for offences committed in the Moray Firth.

MR. WATT (Glasgow College): Does the dictum of the Lord Chancellor override the unanimous dictum of the Judges of the Court of Session in dealing with this matter?

MR. SINCLAIR: I am not aware to what dictum my hon. friend refers.

Spawning Herrings.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to the quantity of spawning herrings now being brought into the Glasgow market; and whether he will impress upon the Fishery Board the necessity of taking immediate steps to prevent the taking of such fish, and to avoid the damage to which the herring-fishing trade of the West of Scotland is in consequence exposed.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am advised that it is a fundamental fact of the herring fishery that the fish are at their very best when spawning, and all efforts are put forth to take them at that time, when they command the highest price in the market. The herring approaches the Scottish coasts to spawn, and to prohibit their capture would do serious injury to the herring fishing industry. I am aware that the herring fishing in the Firth of Clyde has recently been very successful.

MR. WATT asked if a meeting of Clyde fishermen had not unanimously voted in favour of a close time for the Clyde? And would the right hon. Gentleman give effect to that desire?

MR. BEALE (Ayrshire, S.): And has not another meeting been equally unanimous against that?

MR. SINCLAIR: I think the hon. Member for the College Division will find an Answer to his interrogation in the Question of the hon. Member for South Ayrshire.

Lord Ashtown's Gamekeepers.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland with reference to the discharge from prison of two gamekeepers in the employment of Lord Ashtown, who were recently sentenced at the Ballymacarberry petty sessions, from what sources and by what means did the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Justices fully acquaint themselves with the facts of the case within less than twenty-four hours from the time of the conviction of these two men, and without obtaining the views of the chairman who presided at the petty sessions on the occasion; and had Lord Ashtown an opportunity of laying his views on the case directly or indirectly before those responsible for the discharge of these men, either subsequent to or shortly before their conviction.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): I am afraid I cannot add anything to the replies which my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary gave to the hon. Member's previous Questions on this subject. It would be entirely contrary to precedent to discuss, by way of Question and Answer in this House, the circumstances attending the exercise of the Lord Lieutenant's prerogative in such cases.

Mr.. POWER: The right hon. Gentleman has not said how the views of the minority of the bench were ascertained.

Mr. CHERRY: I am afraid I cannot answer that without going into the whole matter, and I understand the rule is that matters of this sort should not be discussed.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: It was done in connection with the release of the Gweedon prisoners.

Lord Ashtown and Mrs. Minnie Walsh.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to a paragraph of a letter addressed by Mrs. Minnie Walsh to Mr. Trench, Lord Ashtown's agent, on the 2nd September, 1907, when she wrote, "I have been counting the minutes since seeing you hoping to hear good news this morning from Woodlawn, but as there is nothing in either the enclosed letter or the *Irish Times* I begin to fear it did not come off; if so, what an awful disappointment, enough to break one's heart"; whether this paragraph referred to the explosion at Woodlawn Church, which five men had been solicited to perpetrate in the anonymous letters produced at the recent trial in Dublin; whether, on 3rd September, after the receipt of the above-mentioned letter, Mr. Trench gave £5 to Mrs. Minnie Walsh to aid her in continuing her investigations; and whether the Irish Government will take effective steps to further investigate this transaction.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, will he say, in view of the disgraceful insinuations conveyed in this and former Questions on the subject, whether there is the slightest evidence in the papers or the facts which have come to his knowledge to show that Lord Ashtown was in any way connected with these anonymous letters?

Mr. CHERRY: If the hon. Member had been present at the debate the other day——

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: I was.

Mr. CHERRY: He might have heard me, and the Chief Secretary as well, say distinctly that we saw no evidence that Lord Ashtown was in any way connected with the letters. My attention has been called to the letter referred to in the Question, but as a criminal charge is pending against Mrs. Walsh in connection with it I refrain from offering any opinion upon it. The other facts stated in the Question appear to be correct, except that it was upon the 5th, not the 3rd, of September that Mr. Trench gave £5 to Mrs. Walsh. I have already stated that I consider his action in doing so most unwise under the circumstances, but it is only fair to him to say that before doing so he received another letter from her dated 4th September, in which she asked for £2 or £3 by way of loan. In answer to the last paragraph of the Question, I shall consult my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary as to whether any, and, if so, what, further steps can be taken in the matter.

Mr. DILLON: Is it the intention of the Crown to put Mrs. Walsh on her trial again?

Mr. CHERRY: That is still under consideration.

*Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman seen the recent appeal of Lord Ashtown for increased financial support, in which it is stated that: "much more might be done in the direction where it is most needed, if only the funds were adequate to the needs?"

Mr. CHERRY: I receive regularly a copy of the document to which my hon. friend refers.

*Mr. J. MACVEAGH: You do not send him any money.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether any of the letters produced at the late trial of Mrs. Minnie Walsh were in the hands of the Crown before 3rd September; and, if so, can he state how many, and what date the same were written.

Mr. CHERRY: I am informed that on 30th August immediately after the receipt of the second anonymous letter from Mrs. Walsh, Mr. Trench, Lord Ashtown's agent, took the two anonymous letters to the Inspector-General, and showed them to him. Mr. Trench kept the originals until 12th September, when he handed them over to the police. Copies of the material parts of these letters were furnished to the Inspector-General on or before 30th August, but none of the original letters were in the hands of the authorities prior to 3rd September.

Mr. DILLON: On what date was the last letter of the correspondence, amounting to sixteen letters, placed in the hands of the authorities?

Mr. CHERRY: I do not know, nor do I think it was ever placed in the hands of the authorities.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE: Am I to understand that of the fifteen letters produced at the trial only one was in possession of the Crown previous to the time the Member for the Division set the Crown in motion?

Mr. CHERRY: The letters were produced by Lord Ashtown at the trial—that is to say, the direct correspondence between Mr. Trench and Mrs. Walsh. The anonymous letters were placed in the hands of the police authorities in order that they might be investigated by an expert in handwriting. But extracts had previously been shown to the Attorney-General.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): What was the date on which the authorities received the letter from Lord Ashtown's agent, dated 2nd September?

Mr. CHERRY: I do not know whether we ever had the original of that letter.

Ballyquintin Point, County Down.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has any information as to the reasons for the delay of the Irish Lights Commissioners in erecting a lighthouse at Ballyquintin Point, County Down.

Mr. KEARLEY: The Commissioners of Irish Lights have made a proposal to improve the lighting in the vicinity of the entrance to Strangford Lough, not by the erection of a lighthouse at Ballyquintin Point, but by the establishment of a light vessel about four miles south-south-east of the entrance to the Lough. The matter is still under consideration by the Board of Trade.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): Is it not the fact that the Commissioners approved a light being placed on this dangerous point some years since?

Can the hon. Gentleman suggest any reason for this long delay? Have not serious wrecks occurred there?

MR. KEARLEY: I can only say that the matter is receiving the attention of the Board of Trade.

MR. T. L. CORBETT: Perhaps we can get a definite answer next week.

Blocking Motions.

MR. BOWLES: May I ask a Question of which I sent private notice to the Prime Minister, whether any further progress has been made with the negotiations with which the Government has undertaken to secure an amendment of the Standing Orders dealing with the practice of putting blocking Motions on the Paper?

MR. ASQUITH (for Sir H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN): We have announced our willingness to move our Amendment to the Standing Orders as soon as we receive an assurance that it will be treated as non-controversial. We are awaiting that assurance from Members opposite. Perhaps the hon. Member will use his influence with his friends.

MR. BOWLES: Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been directed to the fact that unless this Amendment is made it will be within the power of any Member of this House, by putting down a Bill with an adequate title, to prevent discussion, for instance, on the Motion of the hon. Member for Waterford on Home Rule.

MR. ASQUITH: I am quite aware of the abuses which the present rule permits. I am entirely favourable to the change, but it can only be carried out with the general consent of the House.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's) asked as to the business for next week.

MR. ASQUITH: The principal business of next week will be the introduction of the Licensing Bill and the Education Bill. It is proposed to take the Education Bill on Monday and the Licensing Bill on Thursday. That happens to be a convenient arrangement, but, as we live in a suspicious and imaginative world, I think I had better add that, in regard to the future stages, the more important stages of these two measures, His Majesty's Government have not modified, and do not intend to modify, their expressed intention of giving precedence to the Licensing Bill. On Tuesday we propose to take the Committee stage, and, if no Amendment is made, the Third Reading of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, and on Wednesday the same stages of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill. If by any chance, as through Amendments being made in Committee, we are not in a position to take the Third Reading of the Small Landholders Bill on Tuesday, we shall take that stage on Wednesday.

POST OFFICE ESTIMATES.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN Worcestershire, E.): With regard to the business for to-day, I do not know if the Postmaster-General remembers but it may be in the recollection of the House that the right hon. Gentleman promised that the Supplementary Estimates should not be taken until the changes which he proposed to make as a result of the Report of the Select Committee on the conditions of service and pay in the Post Office had been published and time given for their consideration. I find that the Paper is not to be obtained at the Vote Office, although I understand copies have been given to some few selected Members—those I believe who served on the Committee. I am not making complaint of that, but in view of the fact that the Paper is not available for the general body of Members. I wish to know whether, under the circumstances, it is intended to proceed with this Estimate?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Post Office circular has, it is true, only been given to the members of the Committee, but I thought as a matter of courtesy they should receive it. I certainly had no idea that it should be printed as a

Parliamentary Paper, and I do not think that that has ever been done before. It was issued some days ago, and is an ordinary official publication, but not the publication I had in my mind when I spoke on this point before. I hope under the circumstances the right hon. Gentleman will not object to our proceeding with the Estimate to-night.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that previous revisions have been followed by laying a Paper on the Table of the House for the information of Members, giving a full account of the changes sanctioned and the immediate and ultimate cost? Still, I will not press the matter if the right hon. Gentleman says it would be inconvenient to postpone the Estimate, although we have had no such Paper in this case.

***MR. SYDNEY BUXTON**: Perhaps I may be allowed to express my regret at the delay in publishing the revision. There has been great pressure at the Post Office in connection with it. But I will certainly give the House all the information it desires, although I do not really think that the publication of the Post Office circular with all its very minute details was necessary.

SELECTION (UNOPPOSED BILL COMMITTEES) (PANEL).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had selected the following Seven Members to be the Panel to serve on Unopposed Bill Committees under Standing Order No. 109: Sir David Brynmor Jones, Mr. Paulton, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Beale, Mr. Hills, and Mr. Mooney.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

SALE OF WHISKY BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Sale of Whisky, and to provide for the marking of casks and other vessels containing Whisky," presented by Mr. Williamson; supported by Mr. Murray, Mr. Cathcart Wason, and Sir Andrew Torrance; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 7th April, and to be printed. [Bill 102.]

ABSENT VOTERS BILL.

"To facilitate the recording of Votes at Parliamentary Elections by fishermen, sailors, and other persons liable to habitual absence from their usual residence in pursuit of their calling," presented by Mr. Williamson; supported by Mr. McCrae, Sir Robert Ropner, Major Anstruther-Gray, Mr. Havelock Wilson, Mr. Rainy, Mr. Crombie, and Captain Waring; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 7th April, and to be printed. [Bill 103.]

SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, 1875 to 1907," presented by Mr. Mitchell-Thomson; supported by Mr. Younger, Mr. Cleland, Mr. Lamont, and Mr. Rainy; to be read a second time upon Thursday next, and to be printed. [Bill 104.]

AGED PENSIONERS BILL.

"To provide Pensions for the Aged Deserving Poor," presented by Mr. Goulding; supported by Mr. Remnant, Mr. Hay, Mr. John William Wilson, Sir William Bull, Mr. Charles Craig, and Mr. Courthope; to be read a second time upon Friday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 105.]

PLACES OF WORSHIP (SITES) BILL.

"To provide for the acquisition of Sites for Places of Worship by compulsory powers," presented by Mr. David Davies; supported by Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Mr. Hay Morgan, and Mr. William Jones; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 106.]

PLACES OF WORSHIP (ENFRANCHISEMENT) BILL.

"To Enfranchise Places of Worship," presented by Mr. David Davies; supported by Sir Alfred Thomas, Mr. Herbert Roberts, Mr. Hay Morgan, and Mr. William Jones; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 107.]

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL.

"To provide for the acquisition of land for the Extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office; and for certain other public purposes," presented by Mr. Harcourt; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 108.]

PRIMOGENITURE BILL.

"To alter the Law relating to the descent of land upon an intestacy," presented by Mr. Arnold Herbert; supported by Mr. Micklem, Mr. Stewart Smith, Mr. Stanger, Mr. Napier, Sir Albert Spicer, Mr. Herbert Craig, Mr. Haworth, and Mr. Beaumont; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 109.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (SUPPLY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Business of Supply, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House), notwithstanding anything in Standing Order No. 15."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 314; Noes, 73. (Division List No. 17.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen,A.Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Baker,Joseph A.(Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry,Redmond J. (Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hiliare Joseph Peter R.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'r)
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner,J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crombie, John William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies,David (Montgomery Co
Davies, M.Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A.(Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Flynn, James Christopher
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glen-Coats,Sir T. (Renfrew,W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert,Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.

Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry

O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N)
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.

Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Ward, W. Dudley (South'mpton)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E. (Clackmann'n
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount

Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C. W.
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Clive, Percy Archer
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander

Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward

Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Heaton, John Henniker
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt. Hn. Col. W.
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.):** In asking leave to introduce this Bill I quite agree with my right hon. friend opposite that it is reasonable to ask that I should make some statement. I agree that the Bill is of very great importance, that it was mentioned in the King's Speech and that, as a matter of fact, it was introduced last year without any statement on my part. But I do not think it will be necessary even to take advantage of the limited opportunities which the Standing Order puts at my disposal, as the Bill was actually in the possession of hon. Members last year, and I think it will be sufficient if I explain to the House the operation of the first clause, which contains the operative provisions to secure an eight hours day for miners. The effect of the clause is as follows: In each colliery the inspector has to approve the time reasonably required for the purpose of lowering and raising the men. Let us assume that the time fixed at a particular colliery is half an hour. Then let us assume that the men start work at 6 a.m. They would have to be all down by 6.30 a.m. Eight hours is the time prescribed by the Bill for the men to be underground. It therefore follows that the first man must be above ground at 2 p.m., and the last man up must be above ground at 2.30 p.m. If the men ascend in the precise order of their descent it follows that each man would actually be underground, bank to bank, for eight hours. But it is quite obvious that it would be impossible to secure the ascent in the same order as the descent, and therefore we get not an actual eight hours for each man, but an average of eight hours for each man below ground. It works out in this way. If a man is first down and first up he will be below ground for eight hours. If he is first down and last up he will be below ground for eight and a half hours. If he is last down and first up he will be below ground for seven and a half hours, so that it is obvious the average time below ground for each man under the Bill as it stands will be eight hours bank to bank. That is really the proposal which we secure by the provisions in the first clause. The important clauses which allow overtime of one hour per day on sixty days in the year, and which allows the Government by Order in Council to suspend the operation of the Act in case of grave emergency are reproduced in this Bill as well as other clauses dealing with more detailed parts of the Bill which were in the Bill of last year. The Bill, I admit, is one of great importance in its bearing on the coal industry. It is designed to limit to a reasonable extent the dark hours of work of miners under ground. It will be and it must be closely scrutinised in its passage through Parliament in its relations to the commercial and domestic interests of the users of coal, both large and small. The Bill has been the subject for many years past of much discussion and much contention; but those who have differed strongly are not now far apart, and I am sanguine enough to hope and to believe that a satisfactory basis of agreement without disadvantage to the consumers will be found in this Bill, to the lasting benefit of the great population of miners in this country.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Coal Mines Regulation

Acts, 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting hours of work below ground."—(*Mr. Gladstone.*)

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said he desired to raise a voice against the introduction of this Bill, though in view of the fact that it had been discussed on many occasions, he did not desire to divide the House against it. He wished, however, to call attention to the rather remarkable manner in which the Bill had been introduced. On Tuesday they were told by the Home Secretary that it was to be handed in practically without explanation, but although they had had an explanation, no doubt due to the Question of his right hon. friend, it was rather remarkable that the Government assumed this session to have an infallibility with respect to the drafting of their Bills which no other Government had ever assumed to possess before. This was the third Bill they had handed in in identical terms with this, and it certainly seemed rather remarkable that a Bill of this importance dealing for the first time with the limitation of adult male labour, should be on two occasions handed in without a word of explanation, and it was also somewhat remarkable that the Home Secretary, after having had the advantage of discussing the whole of the clauses of the Bill with all the parties interested, yet thought his own infallibility was better than the opinions of anybody else, and that no words should be altered in the Bill, even after all the representations which had been made to him. Although this Bill, in a sense, had been before the House on many occasions, yet they must recollect that discussions on these private Members' Bills always assumed a somewhat unreal effect, even though they were pursued to the division lobby, and even to further stages, because they were a duel always between two sections of the very persons interested; and whilst, in the opinion of many, the most powerful speeches had come from those who represented miners against this legislation, yet as long as the important body which those Members represented were absolutely against the principle of the Bill, everybody regarded it as a somewhat academic debate, and realised that the Bill would never pass into law in the shape in which it was presented. They had now a Bill which was different from any they had ever had as a private Member's Bill, one which was said to be the result of a Committee instituted by this Government. The House had legislated frequently in connection with hours of labour, but it had always legislated in order to protect the weak or the young or those who were unable to protect themselves. The miners' interest was powerful. It was the best organised form of labour. If hours of labour were to be limited, and they were to interest themselves in adult labour, he thought it would be better for the House to turn its attention to such discussions as they might have on the next day rather than deal with those who had by their action already limited hours of labour themselves, and who were perfectly capable of doing so now. This Bill did nothing in the way of meeting the varying circumstances which the condition of the country showed were necessary in connection with this industry. In some parts of the country a limit had been attained far below that mentioned in this Bill. In other parts of the country they were told by the Committee—the Forest of Dean and South Staffordshire—it would be almost impossible to carry out the provisions of the Bill. If he thought the Bill was going to do anything or that there was any hope that it would materially help miners either in connection with their health or for the avoidance of accident, he certainly would be the last to do anything to oppose it, because he had been too much connected with miners and appreciated them too much to take any action of that sort. The Committee had entirely dealt with the question of health, and had given grand testimony to the efforts that had been made to improve the salubrity of mines, and so far as accidents were concerned they had been also informed that there was no evidence to connect accidents with the hours of the day or the longer work. They might therefore put aside questions of health or accident and deal with the matter simply as a question of the limitation of labour. This was the first attempt to limit adult labour, and it would have a great effect upon the commercial interests of the country. From what they had seen in the last few months the miners were perfectly able to obtain advance after advance in wages, and had the same interest been taken in the hours of labour as in an advance of wages they could have obtained it by voluntary action. It was desirable that a voice should be raised against this novel legislation which he believed was not required and which he believed would be a great burden to many portions of the community.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Acts, 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting hours of work below ground," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 110.]

SUPPLY.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (SUPPLEMENTARY) ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

Revenue Departments.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £260,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1908, for the Salaries and Expenses of, the Post Office, including Telegraphs."

*THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have to justify the Supplementary Estimate in the present year and still more to what it will lead in future years. The particular Supplementary Estimate is really a matter to which I need not refer. It affects certain proposals of what is called the Hobhouse Committee, but in most cases they are only matters in which payments have to be made at once, at the beginning of the month instead of at the end. What I think the House is really interested in is the future of this matter and the total expenditure which will be incurred in consequence of the Report of the Parliamentary Committee and the mode in which I propose to adopt that Report. I think it is necessary for me to trace the history of this matter. I regret, as every member of the Committee does, that the Chairman of the Committee, who took such immense trouble over it and had the matter so much at his fingers' ends, is unfortunately prevented from being with us, which makes it more difficult for me to carry out the task which I have before me. When I came into office the position was this. There had been previous inquiries into Post Office servants' wages, some conducted by Committees and some by the Postmaster-General. In every case I think the Post Office servants themselves condemned in advance these inquiries, and the last attempt to deal with the matter by means of a Business Committee has really rather a curious history. That Committee was appointed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire, and the staff at that time objected to the appointment of the Committee, to its *personnel* and to its reference. Then the Committee reported, and my predecessor, Lord Stanley, no doubt for reasons which he thought fully justified his own action, objected to the action of the Committee in regard, I think, to the method in which they carried out their proceedings—namely, that they had not carried out their reference, and that they had exceeded it. Thus the last inquiry we have had was repudiated in advance by the staff, and after the report, by the Government. That, of course, left the matter in a very difficult and unsatisfactory position. I found also on examining into it that for the last sixteen years or so, the staff—the Post Office servants of the operative class—had publicly declared that a tribunal of the character of a Parliamentary Committee and an inquiry of that nature, would alone be to them satisfactory and conclusive. I found, also, that a large majority of Members in all quarters of the House had pledged themselves to support the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee. I was not one of them. When I became Postmaster-General my record was immediately looked up by the staff, and I was glad to find that I had an absolutely blank record and had never voted on any postal subject, and that I thus had a free hand in regard to these matters. It appeared to me that the demand for a further inquiry by a Parliamentary Committee was, under all the circumstances of the case, a reasonable one. It was alleged that the staff were underpaid, and that being so, I think the argument for an inquiry was a strong one. Every Member of the House of Commons is quite willing to believe in the impartiality and justice of its own Committees, and therefore there appeared to be an opportunity of selecting a tribunal which would be satisfactory to both Parties, which could thrash the matter out and arrive at a satisfactory conclusion in the end. That being so, I proposed to my colleagues in the Government the appointment of such a Committee; and appointed it at a very early stage, in order that no time should be lost in carrying it out. The appointment of the Committee was received with universal gratification by all interested. Its composition was considered satisfactory. It was of a very representative character, representing all sections in the House, and the terms of reference were wide and were acceptable. As far as the Department is concerned, my desire was that they should describe to the Committee their position, and the policy and action of the Department (not necessarily my own), not in a hostile spirit, but with fairness and moderation; and I think it was recognised by the staff that the evidence given by the Secretary and by others was given with moderation and fairness and certainly with great lucidity. On the other hand, I desired that the staff should be given every facility for preparing and presenting their case, and I do not think any information was refused which would assist them in so doing. No less than 114 witnesses gave evidence for the staff, and I think gratification was expressed for the care, impartiality and thoroughness with which the Committee discharged their long and arduous duties. After an exhaustive inquiry of some eighteen months, the Committee reported in the terms which the House have before them in the Blue-book. The Report is that of the Committee as a whole. In such a Committee as that no one member is necessarily bound to every item, or proposition, or paragraph in the Report. They were a Committee of the House of Commons desiring to arrive at a common conclusion and to present a unanimous Report. They did, I understand, have many private meetings, like many Committees I myself have been on, at which they had discussions and even divisions which do not appear on the records of the Committee, but which had a great deal to do in bringing them to the harmonious conclusion stated in their Report. Therefore, so far as the Committee are concerned, I think I may say that it is a Report, with the qualification I have stated, of a Committee of the House of Commons. There is no use disguising the fact that when the Report was issued in some quarters it gave rise to considerable disappointment. I never knew a body appointed for the purpose of dealing with a question of salaries which did not give disappointment in some quarter. No one in this unlovely world does get what he desires, or, at all events, he does not get what he thinks he deserves, and, therefore, it was only human nature that those affected in this matter should be disappointed with the conclusions which the Committee came to. I should like to say this. It is not for me to advise or admonish the staff in regard to the attitude which they should assume towards the Report of the Parliamentary Committee. There was this great difference between this inquiry by a Committee of the House of Commons, and that which was made by what is called the Tweedmouth Committee, and that which was made by the Bradford Committee. In each of these cases the men had stated beforehand that they would not be bound by the decision come to as the result of the inquiry. In the case of the Parliamentary Committee it was a tribunal of their own choosing. When I placed the matter of the appointment of the Committee before the Cabinet I was clearly under the impression, and I left my colleagues under the impression, that I was proposing the appointment of a tribunal whose conclusions would be considered, taken broadly, as binding. And, further, so far as I am concerned, I intended in the circumstances of the appointment to accept the Committee's findings whatever those findings might be. And I think I may state equally confidently, without fear of contradiction, that that was the view held by the Post Office staff as a whole, and that the Committee was accepted by them in the spirit in which it was given. I do not think that hon. Members who undertook to support the proposal for the appointment of the Committee would have done so unless they thought that the staff would accept the decision of such a Committee. When I speak of the acceptance of the Report of the Committee I do not mean that it was to carry with it acceptance of the terms for all time to come. In regard to these matters naturally a time comes when changes must be made. The findings of a Committee would be of such a cast-iron nature, that when anomalies arise or when it appears that improved conditions can be carried out from time to time the Report of the Committee would prevent these improvements being carried out by the Postmaster-General. But, generally and broadly, I think we may take it that the general desire expressed at the time the Committee was appointed was that the conclusions to which it would come would practically be accepted. I confess that it is clear to me that if the decision of a Committee of that nature, appointed under these circumstances, is not to be accepted substantially as the verdict, especially by those who have asked for the tribunal, it is a very difficult thing to know how we are to extend these matters of inquiry. There is at present a demand for inquiries, especially in connection with the Civil Service; and generally boards of arbitration are asked in various quarters. But as I said, this is for the staff more than for myself. As regards my position as Postmaster-General my duty appeared to me a plain and clear one, and it was also the opinion of the Treasury. It was, broadly speaking, that I should accept the recommendations of the Committee in full where their recommendations were explicit and definite in regard to the remuneration of Post Office servants. I have been urged as apparently the decision of the Committee will not lead to contentment and satisfactory results to ignore the Report of the Committee and save the money for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That is not my view at all. My primary reason for the appointment of the Committee was that any Government ought to be a good employer of labour, and that, if it could be shown that the conditions of employment in the Post Office fell short of the standard of a good employer, that standard should be brought up to a proper level. I was not prepared, however, much as I might deplore the way in which the Report was received, to withhold improvements in the conditions of the service recommended by the Parliamentary Committee for attaining that object. I think it will be equally clear to the House that under the circumstances of the appointment of the Committee I should not retry the case—a case which had by general consent been referred to a Parliamentary Committee for decision. It was also clear that if I could not retry the whole case, I could not here and there retry portions of it, and alter the decision of the Committee. I have been asked from various quarters—I think by almost every section of the staff—to retry, not necessarily the whole case, but to take their particular class and to consider their particular point. It appeared to me that that was an impossible position for me to take up—that it would be impossible for me to agree to new proposals in one case and to refuse to agree to them in another. It would be impossible to consider the desires of one class and decline to consider the desires of others. Really, that would have amounted to a retrial by myself of the whole case, and that I was not prepared to do, nor do I think it would have been a proper course to pursue with reference to the House and to the Parliamentary Committee. My position was that I accepted the Report of the Committee, and that I would try to carry it out to the fullest possible extent. Then came the question of interpretation. There were certain definite scales proposed.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that almost every section of the staff asked him to re-investigate the Report.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: What I said, or, at all events, meant, was that in regard to the recommendations of the Committee there were certain points on which nearly every section of the staff thought that something better should have been recommended in their case, and my position was that if I had accepted that view in one case, I could not refuse it in another. That appeared to me to be an untenable position. I think the right position was to base myself on the recommendations of the Committee as a whole and not attempt to re-try the case in whole or in parts. Then came the question of interpretation. There were definite scales in the recommendations of the Committee which were sufficiently clear to enable one to interpret them with the greatest ease and to the fullest possible extent. Here also in regard to interpretation there could be no question as to the right course for me to pursue. When I had accepted the recommendations of the Committee, the only course open to me was to put them in force in the way the Committee intended and desired. To have accepted them and then, as I have been urged to do, to have interpreted them in a way the Committee did not intend would have been tantamount to upsetting their decision by indirect means. This might have been popular, but I do not think that would have been a straight-forward or honest course for me to pursue. It appeared to me that the recommendations of the Committee should be interpreted in the way the Committee desired. Apart from the actual scale of remuneration, and where I have been able in these matters to act freely, I have taken a liberal view, and I have endeavoured to improve the conditions of labour in the Post Office. There were one or two special points in regard to the matter to which my attention was specially drawn. The Committee recommended that each officer should be raised to the minimum, or "age pay" of his class, *i.e*, the minimum in those cases where there was no scale and in the others the "age pay" up to twenty-two years in the case of postmen and twenty-one years in other cases, and that that should take place at once. That has been done, and also everyone over that age who was not getting the age pay has already been raised to that point in the scale of his particular class. They also conceded what is called the technical increment. I understand that their desire was to encourage ability and intelligence. The old technical increment of 2s. 4d. did not extend beyond the maximum. The Committee recommended that the technical allowance should extend above the maximum. They added, however, that the examination should be a searching, not a perfunctory, test of the technical or professional knowledge of the telegraphists. The matter is a difficult one, but I have done my best to arrive at what would be in the nature of a practical and searching test which will at the same time not exclude the telegraphist of intelligence who really desires to improve his position. Both the examination and the manipulative test are in the nature of experiments. We shall see by the light of experience whether the experiment is satisfactory or not, and whether the test had been fixed too high or too low. What I desire to do is, as intended by the Committee, both by examination and manipulative test to reward the ability of the telegraphist of intelligence who desires to improve his position. The next point, classification, is a question of interpretation, and is more difficult and more complicated than that with which I have just dealt. In regard to London the matter was simple enough. The Committee recommended that the old four zones of wages should be reduced to three to depend on the cost of living. The result which came out was, from the London postman's point of view, very satisfactory. It was found from the Board of Trade Return that the cost of living in London as compared with other parts of the kingdom, was high, and in nearly every case the men went up. In only one or two cases is the scale put down in London, and that is because, as shown by the Board of Trade Return, the cost of living in those parts is lower than in other districts of the London area. There is one very important point in all cases of classification that I wish to make perfectly clear, and that is that where a man's office is put up a class—that is to say, where there is an increase in the maximum—he goes to that maximum without question. But where his district is put down a class, he himself is not affected at all—he goes up to his old maximum. It is only the new entrants to a class that are affected by the new classification. I now come to the question of the classification of provincial postmen. I ought to explain first, that before the revision came into force there was one system of classification of postmen largely founded on the cost of living, and a totally different classification, of sorting clerks and telegraphists founded on units of work, and a third classification for the supervising classes. The Committee recommended, I presume for simplicity, that all these classifications in the provinces should be combined into one, and the seven classes reduced to five to form a fresh and unified classification. The recommendations of the Committee will be found in Paragraphs 258 and 341 of the Report. They say: "It is both desirable and possible to have a satisfactory classification of the various towns and districts in the United Kingdom for the purpose of assigning to each its proper scale of wages," and they recommend that any classification should be based on the volume of work done as ascertained by the Post Office authorities, plus the cost of living as ascertained by the Board of Trade. They propose this rearrangement of the sorting clerk classes and further a reclassification of the postmen's classes on the same basis. Any classification putting together two classifications which are now dissimilar, must necessarily affect a considerable number of places. There must inevitably be a good deal of going up and a good deal of going down in regard to certain towns. The Committee fully recognised this themselves. In going into the matter carefully, it appeared to me, however, that if I carried out the recommendations of the Committee literally, and without elasticity, there would, in the lower classes, be some hardship to a very large number of future postmen who would have to go down in their classification by being assimilated to the classes of sorting clerks and telegraphists. I, therefore, with the consent of the Treasury, came to the conclusion that while the first three classes could be dealt with similarly, the last two must be dealt with differently, and that there must be a classification of the postmen on a different basis. But it is quite obvious that whatever classification is taken, founded partly on the volume of work and partly on the cost of living, it is necessary that there should be a considerable re-arrangement of classes and towns, increases and decreases. I am glad to know as far as we have been able to re-classify—although I have not yet got all the information—that a considerably larger number of these places will go up in their class, and therefore get an increase, then will have to come down. Let me repeat, wherever there is a change, if it is adverse, it does not affect the maximum of present officers, whereas, if it is advantageous, they will get all the benefit of it by going to the higher maximum. I had the advantage in regard to other points of discussing them with representatives of the men and on several of them my views were modified by these discussions. I hope that in many respects, as, for instance, in regard to stripes, trips, risk allowances, increments, writing duties, substitution, Sunday labour, half holiday and other matters of that description, I was able largely to meet their views. In regard to these matters I have, however, had to consult the Treasury, as the amended proposals in regard to classification will involve a very considerable charge on the Estimates. I must say that the Treasury has met me in a liberal way, where, in regard to this and in other ways I was able to show that a too strict interpretation of the recommendations of the Committee would involve some hardship. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire asked me at Question time to explain what the actual result would be on the postal service as a whole of the recommendations of the Committee if these were adopted. I do not think that he would wish me to go very minutely into the matter, because it is largely technical; but I will give in broad outline the general results which will ensue after the recommendations of the Committee are carried out in the main. As I have already said it is not my business either to defend or to criticise the findings of the Committee. My business has been to adopt them in regard to questions of remuneration. But I think that too much attention has been drawn to, and too much stress laid on the scales themselves proposed by the Committee, and not enough attention has been attached to the very great improvement in other ways which will be conferred on the Post Office service by the recommendations of the Committee. Some perhaps do not get much meal, they all get malt; and in some cases both meal and malt. The conditions of the service has been considerably improved, and at the same time the scale of remuneration in many cases has been raised, and the two things must be taken together in order to appreciate what the result will be on the service as a whole. Next year, 1908–9, the increased expenditure which will fall on the taxpayers in consequence of the recommendations of the Committee will amount to something like £470,000 or £480,000. That amount will increase as years go on, and the ultimate cost will reach between £600,000 and £700,000 a year, rather nearer the latter figure than the former. It is only fair to say also that it is only two and a half years since in another way the Post Office servants also received a very large pecuniary benefit. They are now receiving under the Stanley Revision some £270,000 additional a year, and will eventually receive in future years £370,000. They are now going to have the benefit of a second revision following upon the Hobhouse Committee, and taking these two revisions together, the Post Office servants will benefit in the coming year to the extent of three-quarters of a million and to the extent of a million in future years. I think the House will agree that that is no inconsiderable sum to increase the wages of Post Office officials by in three years.

*MR. GEORGE FABER (York): May I ask what is the percentage of increase?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am afraid I cannot recollect the figures of the percentage on our full expenditure if that is what the hon. Member means.

*MR. GEORGE FABER: On the wages.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am sorry I have not the figures, but I will let the hon. Member know. Then I want to point out with regard to the scheme recommended by the Committee that the scale is increased in some cases at both the top and the bottom. But I am sure, after reading the Report of the Committee and studying their recommendations, that what they were chiefly impressed with was, that those who receive the lowest wage in the Post Office are those who deserve most consideration, and were those who ought to receive larger increases in proportion to the others. They evidently thought, and I very cordially agree with them in the general principle, that there is not in the Post Office in the lower scales a proper living wage, and what they have done, and I think it will be a great benefit to this branch of the postal service, is that while they have not increased in many instances the maximum sum where they thought the maximum sum was sufficient, they have in so many cases at twenty-one years, twenty-two years, or later given an appreciable increase of the amount that the man or woman is receiving at that age—an age at which the increase they recommend will be of the greatest possible advantage. That seems to me to be the general principle upon which they acted and I have carried out their recommendations. But I should like, if the House would allow me, just to take one class and show what will be the actual result of the recommendations of the Committee with regard to it. I will take the postman as an illustration, because he comes more under our eye than any other branch of the service, and everybody desires that he should be well treated and receive a proper wage. In the lower grade the maximum wages of 18s. and 20s. have been raised to the maximum of 21s., and they have also raised in some cases the minimum wage of the lowest scale of wages. Let me say this, we are sometimes told that this scale, or the other scale is too low and that it does not represent the fixed wage received by others. That is perfectly true, but no scale wage will ever at its lowest point equal the fixed wage which is settled and will not be increased. That is obvious; you cannot have it both ways. These men in the Postal Service have a low wage to begin with; gradually they reach the higher level, and this process of advancement is different from the case of the ordinary labouring man, who has to be content with a fixed wage when he is young as well as when he is old. Further, the House in regard to many of these cases must not take this scale of minimum wages as being all these men really gain from their State service. The postman, I am glad to think, has many advantages in other respects, and I think you may put it broadly that the man who has a wage of 18s. or 20s. a week at twenty-one years of age is really receiving what is roughly speaking equivalent to 24s. Above twenty-one the man on the lowest scale who is receiving 21s. as a maximum by the time he has risen to the maximum in stripes, uniform, and other ways, will be really earning over 30s. a week in cash and privileges. I do not think that is quite appreciated when people talk of scales of wages, and of the recommendations of the Committee. The net increase during next year, the immediate increase for the London, provincial and assistant postmen, which will follow from the recommendations of the Committee will be £80,000 a year. In addition to that the Committee recommended that the stripe period should be reduced after the first five years from five to four years. At present the postman has to serve five years for every stripe for which he gets 1s. a week, but the Committee recommend that in future that period shall be reduced from five to four years. In connection with that matter the Postman's Federation asked me to make the proposal retrospective. That is to go back so that every five years a man has served in the past shall be reduced to four in counting for stripes. After consulting the Treasury we did not think the recommendations of the Committee, which obviously provide for the future and not for the past, could be put into force with a retrospective increase. But I am glad to say I obtained the assent of the Treasury to this, that instead of the new system coming into operation as these other changes do from 1st January, it shall come into force from the last period at which a man obtained his stripe, so that he will not have to wait for a period of five years. Thus if a man has served four years since his last stripe he will get his fresh stripe from January 1st. If he has served for more than four years he will carry on the additional time towards the next four years. The ultimate result of the stripe addition for the postman will be about £30,000, but there are other branches of servants who will receive it, and the whole total will be £33,000. The proposal to which I have just referred with the Treasury will bring into operation this year nearly half that sum. In addition to this, postal servants benefit in other ways, but I do not think the Committee will desire me to go through each class in detail, and I really must apologise for detaining it at this length, but I think they will see that it is necessary. There are two classes, however, about which I should like to say a word. The one is the question of the women, of whom there are a very large number employed in the Post Office, and I believe that many of them are active "suffragettes." I am glad to think that the Committee recognise that the women in the service of the State are not sufficiently paid at the bottom of the scale or at the top of the scale, and they have made recommendations which will involve very considerable increases in the pay of the women, amounting to many thousands a year. I think that will be an increase to which everybody will give their blessing. While the Committee made appropriate recommendations in regard to this class of workers, it must also be remembered with regard to the classes as a whole, that the supervising officers are receiving in a large number of cases very considerable increases of their salaries. Of course, that is not only of immediate advantage to those who are holding these positions, but it is also an increase in regard to the positions on promotion of those who are below them, so that the increases given to the supervising officers may be added to the benefits which are given by the Committee to other classes of the postal service. Then in addition to the actual increase to which I have referred, there are a large number of proposals made by the Committee which will go very much in the direction of improving the conditions of service. They are some of them rather technical questions and refer to such things as trip and risk allowances, the question of Sundays, and of substitutes, and so forth. My right hon. friend the Member for East Worcestershire will understand these terms, but I am afraid that to most members of the Committee they will not convey much. But at all events all these are practically cash additions to the recommendations of the Committee in regard to the question of scale. The Committee recommend this change, with which I also cordially agree, that no assistant postman shall remain an assistant postman in the future for more than two years without being offered an established appointment. This will also apply to learners, and no learner will be a learner for more than two years without being offered an established appointment. That will put an end to what has occasionally happened in the past to these assistant postmen and learners in having their service spread over some of the best years of their lives without being able to obtain an established appointment.

MR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): The right hon. Gentleman says they will not be allowed to remain more than this time without being offered these appointments. Does that mean that if a permanent appointment is not offered to these officials, say because there are no appointments open, they will be dismissed.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No, I mean exactly the opposite. What I meant was this, that in the future every assistant postman and every learner will be offered at the end of his two years, if not previously, an established appointment. Perhaps I ought to add this, it will not be possible always to offer that appointment to a learner or an assistant postman in his own office, and if an offer is made to them elsewhere and is refused, our liability will be discharged, but the intention is that at the end of two years, if not before, the offer of an established appointment shall be made. Then there is another question in regard to which I entirely agree with the Committee. It is their recommendation in regard to casual and auxiliary labour in the Post Office. I should like to say of the casual and auxiliary labour in the Post Office that without any reflection on them, I do not think that it is a right system that a Public Department should have as much casual and auxiliary labour as we have had in the past. It is, however, a very difficult problem how best to reduce it, because establishment appointments cannot be created beyond what are sufficient for the service. The Department desires to reduce auxiliary labour to the lowest point; but it cannot abolish it altogether. As to Bank Holidays, anyone who works on Bank Holidays at all will be given a day off at some other time. The remuneration for night work will be increased, because in future it will be reckoned from eight o'clock instead of from ten. The attendances of postmen will be improved. Overtime ought to be carefully watched and checked, though, thanks to the public, it cannot be abolished altogether, owing to the irregularity of the pressure in the postal service. As to the insanitary condition of some of the post offices, the Post Office is not the only Department concerned in the question, but the recommendation of the Committee will strengthen the hands of both departments. The other class to which I desire to refer is the engineering branch of the postal service. As a result of the Committee's recommendations—and no doubt largely due to the presence on the Committee of the two Labour Members—the wages of both skilled and unskilled labour will be put on a basis on which they have never stood before. These wages, in my opinion, have not been up to the outside standard. I have myself often thought that, while the Fair Wages Resolution was being enforced, and was very useful to bring contractors up to the proper rate, some branches of the Government Service were taking the mote out of the eyes of the contractors, while forgetting the beam in their own. In the whole of the engineering department the immediate advance of wages and salaries will amount to no less than £70,000 a year, and the hours, in some cases, will be improved. As to the general position, many of the recommendations of the Committee are in a direction in which the Department has always endeavoured to go; but the necessary money or opportunity has not always been forthcoming. I have a very difficult and delicate task in carrying out this revision, and I must ask great indulgence while I am trying to fulfil the duties laid on me by the Report of the Committee. I have always stated and have endeavoured to act on the view that a Government Department should be a good employer of labour. I do not think that the Post Office service asked to be treated as a privileged class; but there are three privileges which they do enjoy—a minimum wage, security and continuity of employment, and pensions for old age. The Committee was appointed to see how far in other respects the service conditions fell short of the proper standard. The Committee has made certain recommendations, and those I accept, and it is for the House to say whether they endorse their recommendations and mine. We all recognise and much appreciate the heavy labour thrown on the Committee, and the efficient way in which an irksome, disagreeable, and thankless task has been discharged. In endorsing the findings of that Committee, I ask the House not to grudge the large sum necessary for such improvements in the conditions of a very efficient and deserving body of public servants.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) expressed his desire, before dealing with the various points of the speech of the Postmaster-General, to thank him for the unwavering courtesy he had always shown to those connected with the Committee and all those who had had to approach him on the various details of his various departments. He shared also the regret of many hon. Gentlemen at the enforced absence of the Chairman of the Committee, who spared no pains in drafting the Report of the Committee, which was in truth his own Report. With that preface he ventured to say that every Member of the Committee would agree, as the right hon. Gentleman had stated, that it was only right that the State should be a model employer of labour. He believed three main principles should be strictly observed. First of all, every man and woman employed ought to be in receipt of a fair living wage, and every man when he had reached an age when he might be supposed to have a family to maintain should be earning sufficient to support them in comfort and decency. In the next place, the hours of labour should be such as not to endanger the health or impair the energies of the workers. Lastly, the conditions under which the work was done should be at least as favourable to the health and comfort of the employees as those of the best conducted factory or workshop. Those who read the Report of the Committee and the evidence taken before it would be satisfied that in the past the Post Office had failed to fulfil perfectly any of these conditions. It had in certain cases fallen very far short of a much lower standard. The wages, especially of the younger men and women, had been often grossly inadequate at some of the offices, and the sanitary arrangements of a good many had been such as no private employer would have dared to tolerate in view of the existence of the Factory and Health Acts. Coming to the scales of pay laid down by the Committee and adopted by the right hon. Gentleman, he desired to say, first of all, that they were all aware of the fact that the scale as applied by the right hon. Gentleman had created a deal of disappointment among the postal officials, who would have liked the change to have been more drastic. In that they had his sympathy, because he believed that if the improvement had been greater the settlement would have been more permanent. At the same time he did not share the views of those who believed that he and those who thought with him should have refused to acquiesce in the Report because the scale of pay had not been raised to a higher standard. Not to have agreed to the Chairman's Report would have been to prevent its being unanimous, and it would have deprived it of the authority which unanimity would give it, and resulted in the Committee's work being whittled away, and the Report shelved by the reactionary influences to be found in every organisation. Although the Report fell short of the demands of many of the employees one must recognise that it marked a great step ahead and placed the staff in a better position than they were before. The Report involved a considerable sum of money, and he believed the House as a whole would support the view of the Committee that they were right in concentrating their attention upon increasing the minimum rather than increasing the maximum of wages. He had heard with great pleasure the announcement that the Postmaster-General had adopted the scale whereby the position of female sorters and telegraphists would be substantially improved. They had been grossly underpaid. The right hon. Gentleman in his statement had rather led them to believe that his adoption of the revision would apply to all the existing staff; but unless he was greatly misinformed, there were many sections of the postal servants to whom that revision would not apply, and to whom it would be a dead letter. There were, for instance, certain classes in the Engineers' Department, in regard to which the conditions set forth in the revision would only apply to new entrants. That was not the intention of the Committee. From first to last in drafting the Report the vital principle in the minds of the Committee was that every postal servant should benefit from the recommendations contained in the Report. He would ask the Postmaster-General if in the revision he found any hardships not to give a pedantic interpretation to the language of the Report, but to give it a wide and generous interpretation, and one which would be sure to convey the obvious intention of the Committee. There were one or two cases which seemed to him inexplicable, and could not be justified by the Report of the Committee. In the case of the telegraphists, for example, he would quote two instances with which he was familiar personally—he referred to the case of the Lombard Street and Threadneedle Street Post Offices. Telegraphists at Threadneedle Street Post Office would receive 65s. a week, while those at the Lombard Street Post Office, which was only just across the road, would receive 63s. a week. If that were so, the Government in this instance were repeating exactly the iniquities of which complaint had been made. The men in both those post offices passed exactly the same examinations and belonged to the same grade—whatever official hair-splitting and technique might declare—and they got into either of these offices, if he might say so, by a mere fluke. It was merely a question of different buildings in which the same work was being performed. It seemed to him all the more indefensible seeing that the telegraphists at the Central Office received 65s. plus technical allowance, whilst the cable room staff were recruited from the Central Office staff. He hoped the Postmaster-General, before this debate concluded, would give them some further information and a satisfactory assurance on this point. And now with regard to the technical test. The Committee, after due consideration, reported that the old technical test was perfunctory and should be revised. But it seemed to him that the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand had gone from one extreme to another, because they were now imposing a new test, and one unreasonably severe. He desired the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider this matter forthwith, because the test seemed to be absurdly high.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: May I point out that these tests refer only to officers working particular instruments to which they have been accustomed.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said he gathered from what the right hon. Gentleman had said that the trouble to which he had referred would not arise in the future. The technical test question seemed to him to be giving a good deal of trouble and was causing a considerable amount of irritation, and that was why he was anxious that it should be dealt with without any further delay.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: If the hon. Member will only read the figures given in the Report he will see that that is not necessary, as it is not causing either trouble or irritation.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said he was very glad the Postmaster-General had been able to remove a misapprehension. He would now proceed to deal with those details in the Committee's recommendation which the Postmaster-General did not propose to carry out. First of all, there was the case of the sorters employed on night duty. It seemed to him very undesirable that the same man should be employed on night duty for more than four weeks at a stretch. From whom did the objection to this reform recommended by the Committee come? Did it come from the men now employed permanently on night duty, or from others who were not permanently employed? If from the latter he did not think the objection had much weight.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The recommendation about night duty, I may point out, did not commend itself to those who were specially interested in that work, and the association representing the sorters actually asked me not to carry it out. Of course, as the sorters themselves did not desire it carried out I was very glad to meet their wishes in the matter.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said he was pleased to receive that information, and he only wanted to know the reason why.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It says so in the Report.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the telegraphists and sorters preferred the present system was directly in conflict with much of the evidence given before the Committee. He was, however, quite satisfied from one point of view, and that was that the weekly half-holiday would be granted "where the staff desired it.' He thought the Committee should be assured that there could be no possibility of official or departmental pressure being put upon the men; they should be absolutely free agents in the matter.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Certainly.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said the Postmaster-General had referred to a matter in which he took a very keen interest, and he had passed very lightly over it. The subject he alluded to was in Paragraphs 54 and 62, viz., the relations between the Post Office and the Office of Works. He thought his colleagues would bear him out when he said that the Committee were strongly of opinion that all the work now done by the Office of Works for the Post Office should be taken from the Office of Works and put under the Postmaster-General; or, in other words, that the Postmaster-General should be master in his own house and be able to run his own business without having to go cap in hand to another Department. It was against common sense that such an arrangement should be allowed to continue when they remembered that the Post Office, next to the Army and Navy, employed a far larger number of men than any other Department of the State. The evidence before the Committee showed disgraceful delay by the Office of Works in carrying out the most ordinary repairs necessary for the minimum of comfort of any of the staff and repairs which were absolutely necessary if the first principles of health as affecting those employed were to be observed. He knew the difficulties of the situation, and he was aware how the Treasury would put every obstacle in the way as well as the Office of Works, but nevertheless he advised his right hon. friend to pluck up his courage and if he brought about this reform his *regime* would be marked not only by many of the advantages which he had already cited, but by the fact that he would be the man who had made himself master in his own house. The Postmaster-General had also skimmed over the question of medical inspection, upon which he asked him to give them a little more information. In Paragraphs 47 and 48 of their Report the Committee did not mince words as to their view of the Chief Medical Officer, and he did not hesitate to say that the impression left upon his mind was that that officer had not been doing his duty to the extent which they might reasonably expect, and that much of the discontent of the staff, and many of the complaints made were due to this officer's negligence. He regretted that the right hon. Gentleman had not announced that he had taken in hand the drastic reorganisation of the Department. He was also very much surprised to see that simultaneously with the Report of the Committee upon this point, this particular official's salary had been raised by another £250 per annum. It would probably be said that this increase came about in the ordinary course of things, and independently altogether of any view expressed by the Committee or the Postmaster-General. Perhaps he would be allowed to refer now to one or two questions which the Committee by its terms of reference were not able fully to consider, but with which they dealt in their Report. In the first place, there was the all important question of civil rights. In that connection he could only speak for himself, because the Committee had declined by the casting vote of the Chairman to adopt his view. The Amendment he moved in Committee would have conferred civil rights upon the postal staff where they were at present denied to them. He could not for the life of him see why those engaged in Post Office work, with perhaps the exception of certain high officials, should not enjoy the same civil rights as any other body of citizens. Why a man who pushed a red cart or basket on which the letters E.R. were painted was denied civil rights and the man who pushed the same vehicle with the name of some firm upon it was allowed to exercise those rights he could not understand. It could not be alleged that those two classes of employees stood in a different position. He sincerely hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give this matter his earnest attention and at the earliest possible moment lay proposals before Parliament on the subject. He did not think the matter could be lightly dimissed by saying that the Postmaster General was precluded from taking action upon it because there were certain rules which governed the whole of the Civil Service. The Committee declined to go into individual grievances, but it was quite clear from what came before them that the present system of dealing with individual grievances was most unsatisfactory. He was quite confident after all that was said before the Committee and in face of the evidence, direct and indirect, that it was absolutely necessary there should be some tribunal which could deal with individual grievances, and revise from time to time the conditions of Government employment in the Post Office. This brought him to the question of a permanent Board of Arbitration for the settlement of disputes between the State and its servants. The present moment seemed highly propitious for the Government to make proposals on this subject, because it was only quite recently that the President of the Board of Trade had been able to avert a very serious industrial dispute in connection with the railway industry of this country. They ought to bear in mind that the Government were really in a very serious position when they denied to their own servants those rights which the railway companies conferred on their employees. He regretted that a strike had taken place, but it was no use shutting their eyes to the fact.

*THE CHAIRMAN: That is hardly a matter which ought to be dealt with on the Supplementary Estimates. We are now dealing with the money voted in the Supplementary Estimates and not with the general policy, which can only be properly discussed upon the presentation of the ordinary Estimates.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY said he welcomed the assurance from the Chair that they would have an opportunity to discuss this Report when the ordinary Estimates came up. He sincerely hoped that between now and the time when the Estimates were presented the inconsistencies in the interpretation of the Select Committee's Report, and the larger matters not touched upon by the revision, would receive the earnest and special attention of the Postmaster-General, so that they might have some permanent settlement of this Post Office trouble, and gain thereby not only the object the Government had in view in appointing this Select Committee, but also the maintenance amongst the staff of that efficiency upon which they prided themselves. He sincerely hoped they would see this year a settlement which would set at rest once and for ever the immense trouble which this subject had caused in the past. If the Postmaster-General did this, he was sure he would receive the warmest support from all parts of the House.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said he was delighted to hear that the Postmaster-General was not going to place any obstacles in the way of the suggested amendments in regard to the working conditions of postal servants recommended by the Committee. He had been given to understand that previously a great deal of the trouble and difficulty had been caused by Post Office officials preventing the Postmasters by persuasion or by power, or by some occult power they possessed, from doing the things they wished to do for the purpose of removing grievances from this class of people. It was quite clear that if this charge had been possible and well founded against previous Postmasters-General, on this occasion they had a Minister who intended to carry out to the letter the recommendations of the Committee. He had been very much struck by an observation which fell from the last speaker upon this subject. The hon. Member for Hoxton started by declaring that he thought the Post Office Committee ought to have made far more drastic proposals with regard to the remuneration of postal servants. He had not the slightest doubt considering the state of parties in this House, and the Party that had to control and be responsible for the finances of the country, and the management of the Post Office, no matter what drastic proposals had been suggested they would have been supported by the hon. Member for Hoxton. The value of that support could be best appreciated by two incidents which occurred in the House that day. The hon. Member had just dwelt upon the necessity of granting civil rights to the whole of the postal servants. He desired to point out that he was compelled in a very early part of the proceedings on the Committee to move a drastic resolution in reference to this subject, but later on the hon. Member for Hoxton moved another resolution which was not quite so drastic dealing with the same point. Only that very morning the hon. Member for Hoxton was questioning the Postmater-General, begging him to deprive certain sections of the postal service of their civil rights——

*MR. CLAUDE HAY begged the hon. Member's pardon; he never said anything of the sort. The hon. Member was entirely misrepresenting what he said and the object of his question. What he desired was to get the same civil rights for others, and the same rights which the Socialists now enjoyed.

MR. JOHN WARD said the proper course for the hon. Member was to have endeavoured to obtain the same rights for the others, instead of attempting to deprive those who had already secured those rights. This subject of civil rights was an extremely important one and he held definite views upon it. He could not see why any officer of the State could not do just what he chose in his own time so long as the performing of his duty as a citizen did not prevent him doing his duty to his own Department of the State. He had never been able to ascertain the reason for this course of action, and the evidence given before the Committee had not in the least altered his opinion upon it. He agreed that the Committee had a very formidable task before it. He did not suppose they had satisfied everybody, and personally he never went on the Committee with the idea of satisfying any body but himself. He had given his careful attention to the evidence which he, as a Member of the Committee, was called upon to consider, and conscientiously the Committee had done their best and had given the best advice they could to the House upon a very difficult and intricate subject. He knew enough of labour negotiations himself to know that it was very rarely indeed that there was not a considerable minority who afterwards blamed the majority for not having demanded more. But the Committee were not aiming at finality; their aim was to do the best they could for the workmen of the Department and especially those in the lower grades, and in that he thought they had been successful. The Committee tried to do their best for the workpeople of the Department. When the House came to understand the number of employees whose interests were involved they would see what a difficult matter it was. There were about 80,000 males, 10,970 female servants, 17,000 boy messengers, 16,400 auxiliary postmen, and 22,000 sub-postmasters. He thought the Committee had succeeded in doing something, though it might not be everything that was expected by the officials and officers of the Department. The most difficult part of the whole controversy was the method the Postmaster-General was going to employ for the purpose of putting the recommendations of the Committee into practice. The Committee discovered that there seemed to be no general method of deciding the classification and payment for certain towns and districts. All kinds of suggestions were made as to the correct method of deciding the matter, and eventually the Committee decided upon two main principles to decide what the *status* of a town or district should be. The first was the volume of work in a district, and the second was the cost of living. He did not know how the Post Office decided the volume of work—how it counted up its units of works or anything of that kind. That was a matter entirely within the purview of the Postmaster-General and his permanent officers. So much depended upon the proper classification of towns and districts in the bringing of contentment to the Department that, if he were the Postmaster-General, he would not hurry this phase of the subject. He would give every opportunity for every possible consideration and objection with regard to any classification that might be made, because, perhaps, while the Postmaster-General would declare his own Department infallible, he (Mr. Ward) felt certain that all the Departments of the Government might not be equally infallible. For instance, figures with reference to rents in certain localities were put before the Committee for the purpose of guiding them in deciding this very important point. He took the town that he was personally acquainted with, Stoke-on-Trent, to see how far the information as to the cost of living, and especially of house accommodation was concerned, as he thought it would enable him to get a fair criterion of what the information was worth regarding places that he knew nothing about. It was said that in Stoke-on-Trent they could get four-roomed houses at from 3s. 9d. to 4s. 3d. a week. All he could say was that he would not ask any postal servant of any grade to live in a house at Stoke on 3s. 9d. a week. The thing was utterly absurd to anyone who knew the district. Therefore he would not hurry on that part of the business. He would not alter the maximum in any degree until he was positively certain that this information was beyond dispute and that every interest had been properly considered. The Postmaster-General had made no reference to a very important subject. He had told them that the classification would be made—it might be in the making to-day—but he had not told them anything as to the length of time that the present classification was to be observed. Hon. Members would quite understand that the industrial circumstances of a locality changed every four or five years. The whole character of a district according to the influx of population or the state of a particular business sometimes entirely changed. The Postmaster-General should not aim at setting up a classification to-day that was going to last for ever. There ought to be some periodical re-examination of the classification, and he thought the period at the outside ought not to be more than three, four, or five years, so that the Postmaster-General might have such *data* and such information at his disposal as would enable him to deal fairly with all these multifarious interests. He did not plead for his own locality alone. The Postmaster-General ought to decide on general grounds. Members would know whether a man really came there to represent the interests of the nation as a whole, or just his own locality. By his own recommendation his district's maximum was reduced a considerable amount, and he was sure he would be violently attacked for that reason, but that did not alter his opinion that the cost of living in a district and the volume of work in the Department should be the deciding factors in deciding the classification of the officers in a town or district. Therefore he particularly wanted that inquired into. Yesterday he received a communication from one of the postal servants' organisations, and he understood other hon. Members had received a similar communication. It was as follows—

> "DEAR SIR,—A Supplementary Estimate will come on for discussion on Thursday. May I ask you to be in your place on that day. The Hobhouse Committee raised every existing scale of pay of postmen, but left the allocation of the pay to the Department. The result is that the Department instead of raising the wages of the men has actually reduced them in many places."

That statement required some explanation. It appeared on the face of it as if the Hobhouse Committee and the Post Office between them had deliberately decreased the wages of some men working in the Department. That statement was entirely untrue. The Committee had declared that under no circumstances must their recommendation deprive any officer at present in the employment of the Post Office of a single advantage he possessed to-day, and reduce him either in *status* or wages or classification or in any way whatever; hence where this classification might reduce the maximum of a district those who had joined before the maximum was finally fixed would receive the maximum under which they joined; so that they had not reduced the wages of a single man in the Department. Therefore some explanation of that document was necessary, because he should object to doing anything that would reduce the wages of workpeople. He was rather apt to do the opposite if he could.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said that, so far as he could, he had made it perfectly clear in his speech that no existing officer under any circumstances would be prejudiced in his maximum by the classification.

MR. JOHN WARD said there was one other side of the subject which he would like the House to be acquainted with. Most hon. Members would agree that so far as the working conditions and the established workers in the Post Office were concerned the Hobhouse Committee had given thorough attention to them. But there were a considerable number of workers working indirectly for the Department in regard to whom the Committee by the terms of reference had no right of inquiry at all. For instance, the 22,000 sub-postmasters employed nearly 50,000 assistants. He hoped the House appreciated that. They had no information as to the wages or working conditions of these assistants. The principle of indirect employment was very bad, and it ought to be avoided on every possible occasion. He did not know what the Postmaster-General advised in reference to that subject, but he was sorry to say the right hon. Gentleman seemed inclined to extend the principle of indirect employment rather than otherwise. The hon. Member for West Bradford put a Question to-day in reference to private wires for Press service, and he was sorry to think that the Postmaster-General had suggested that newspaper proprietors might league themselves together for the purpose of monopolising wires on those lines, when they might have their own operators, which would, of course, naturally result in neither the House nor the Department having any control over those operators and in deciding either their rates of pay or the conditions of their work. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say in his Answer that the system had been in existence for a number of years in reference to a number of newspapers, and that that was his only excuse for extending it. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would thoroughly consider the subject and pause before he consented to anything which would extend the system of indirect labour in his Department. In conclusion, he did not think he would have consented to act as a member of the Committee if he had been an old Member and had understood the ropes; and he did not think he would take on another such job. However, he had served his apprenticeship on this occasion. The Committee had done the best they could under the circumstances, and though they might not have satisfied all the different grades of employees in the Department they had done their best to deal fairly as between all classes.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) called the attention of the Postmaster-General to complaints which had been made by members of the Post Office service in Ireland with reference to the proceedings of the Committee. He did not know whether the hon. Member for Stoke who gave such very valuable service to the Committee could throw any light on the matter; but it was alleged by the Post Office clerks in Ireland that they were prevented putting their case fully and fairly before the Committee. In the first place, he believed that the number of witnesses they desired to call was curtailed very much, and that they were unable to bring before the Committee the evidence of a certain class of witnesses which it would have been very desirable for the Committee to have heard. For instance, they were unable to bring forward any evidence on behalf of the travelling Post Office officials, and, therefore, a great deal in connection with their case was entirely untouched. Nobody was in a position to give the evidence necessary in that regard except some of those who were actually engaged in the travelling Post Office work. Another complaint was that the evidence which they had prepared and submitted was entirely interfered with—not by the Chairman of the Committee, whose absence from the House that day everybody regretted—but by the secretary or some other authority. He believed the representatives of the Irish Post Office officials sent in a carefully prepared copy of the evidence they had prepared.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think we can discuss on this Supplementary Estimate the action of the Committee in regard to evidence. That must come on on next year's Estimates. But the hon. Member will be in order in referring to any hardship which these people think they are suffering from by the actual recommendations made by the Postmaster-General.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND, with great respect to the Chairman's ruling, submitted that as they were now asked by the Postmaster-General to endorse and accept the findings of the Committee, he was entitled to show reason why at least some of the Post Office officials had expressed their disinclination to be satisfied with those findings. The reason was that they were unable to place their case fully and fairly before the Committee. While fully recognising the sincere desire of every Member of the Committee to carry out the inquiry entrusted to them in an impartial manner, those officials were not satisfied that they were able to place their case fully and fairly before the Committee. He submitted to the Postmaster-General that that was an extremely unsatisfactory and undesirable state of affairs. He was not himself in a position to offer an opinion on the subject.

MR. JOHN WARD said that as the chairman of the Committee was absent he would like to say that so far from interfering with any evidence, the utmost limit, within reason, was given for every kind of evidence to be submitted.

*THE CHAIRMAN: That is discussing a matter which does not arise on this Supplementary Estimate.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he would not pursue that matter further. He could assure the hon. Member for Stoke that it was entirely without his knowledge that the evidence offered from Dublin was interfered with and was not tendered at the time. He submitted that it was extremely undesirable and disappointing in a matter of this kind to find that there was dissatisfaction with the Report and the recommendations of the Committee on the part of a large section of Post Office officials. The right hon. Gentleman would not deny that the Post Office servants in Ireland were to a great extent cut off from the governing body of the Post Office in London, and they were entitled to have as much consideration given to their views as any Post Office servants in this country. The fact remained that the object of the Committee was to remove the grievances of which Post Office servants complained, and that dissatisfaction continued amongst a great number of the officials in Ireland; and he feared that so far as they were concerned the good results they hoped for from the labours of the Committee would not be found. He hoped, when the Chairman of the Committee returned to the House, to take the opportunity of placing before him privately the views of these Irish Post Office officials, and from what he knew of that hon. Gentleman he was sure that he would take the trouble to inquire into the statement he would lay before him, and in all probability would have some explanation to make which he, and those whom he represented, would consider satisfactory. On the general question the Postmaster-General was to be heartily congratulated upon the fact that he was identified with what was obviously a very sincere desire on the part of the authorities to better the position of the Post Office officials. The large amount which he asked the Committee to vote for the Post Office servants would be readily granted by hon. Members in all quarters of the House. Nobody denied that for a long period in many ways the Post Office officials had not received the consideration to which their labours entitled them. Probably there was no branch of the public service more entitled to consideration than the Post Office servants; and it was always with a light and ready heart that he voted the money for the Post Office service. He hated voting money for the Army and Navy. But in spite of the extra Vote an enormous number of postal servants would receive no benefit whatever. That was an unsatisfactory thing. He agreed with the Postmaster-General that those officials who were affected by the change had some reason to be satisfied; but it was undoubtedly the fact that a very large number of perhaps the most deserving and most hard-working servants would not have their position improved at all, at least for a very long time, according to the arrangements which had been placed by the Postmaster-General before the Committee. That was a very unfortunate thing. He believed that if the Postmaster-General had seen his way to recognise that all the servants in the Post Office and the Telegraph Office were entitled to some increase of their remuneration and had made a larger demand on the House he would not have had the slightest trouble in getting the Vote through. He was the more sorry that the right hon. Gentleman did not take that view, because he knew perfectly well that, however much it might be desired, the proposals of the Government at the present time would not settle the question. He could only speak for Ireland in regard to the matter, and he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that the Post Office servants of Ireland had no liking or anxiety for continued agitation, as it might be called, in this matter. They were sincerely anxious to be placed on a footing which would be satisfactory and end the struggle once and for all. He was informed, however, by some of the associations representing the workers in Ireland, that these proposals would not satisfy them. He did not think that the right hon. Gentleman had gone into the matter sufficiently largely. What he had done was good so far as it went, but it left a large number of the most deserving officials in the Post Office in Ireland and in this country, entirely unimproved in regard to their position. He asked the right hon. Gentleman before he finally — and, of course, the final settlement of this matter did not rest with the Committee or with the Hobhouse Committee but with the Department—came to a decision to go very thoroughly into the matter and to endeavour to see whether it would not be possible to make a change which would be beneficially felt all round, and not one which would leave a large number of the least paid and the most worked of the officials still under the impression that they had a grievance. What was the position of the Post Office in Dublin? Up to the present time, he did not know that they had any record whatever of the volume of work which passed through the Post Office of the city of Dublin. A great deal would depend upon that for the workers, as far as he could make out under the regulations; and he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to say what the exact position of the Post Office in the city of Dublin would be and the volume of work which passed through it.

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will answer that at once by saying that Dublin is in the first class, and will have the maximum scale.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND was very glad the right hon. Gentleman had made that statement, and he presumed he had made it based upon the volume of work which passed through the Dublin Post Office.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON assented.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said that, so far as he knew, that statement had never been made before. He could only say that while he was very glad that the Hobhouse Committee was appointed, and while he was rejoiced that the recommendations that they made were being carried out to improve the position of a hard-worked body of public servants, he hoped that the question would be dealt with, detail by detail, and in a manner which would remove all dissatisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman said it was impossible to satisfy the claims of any body of people when it came to a question of salary. He did not know that he was disposed to agree entirely with that, because he believed that the public servants of the country asked for nothing but a fair wage, and that their demands were not extravagant and might be satisfied by wise and moderate concessions. He appealed to the Postmaster-General, at any rate, not to be influenced by that section of public opinion which was manifested sometimes in this House, which seemed to think that public servants were not entitled to agitate for their rights or to express their opinions. He was aware, and every Member of this House must be aware, that a great deal of prejudice had been raised against Post Office officials because they had banded themselves together to demand their rights. They were in his judgment perfectly at liberty to do so, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not be influenced by any action they had taken in this matter.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): I have, I suppose, like every other Member of this House, received a communication from the Postal and Telegraph Servants Association complaining of the decision at which the Committee has arrived, and at the action which the Postmaster-General has taken; but I do not rise to press this complaint upon the right hon. Gentleman, because I am quite certain of this, that an individual Member of this House, without access to information which only the Postmaster-General has at his command, without the power to have the whole facts of the case before him and to see every side of the question, is quite unable to form an intelligent and a trustworthy judgment upon these questions, often of a very technical character, and always of a very detailed nature. I have much too great a sense of responsibility, having held office in the Post Office itself and in other Government Departments to desire to render the right hon. Gentleman's task one whit more difficult than it inevitably is, or to take advantage of the freedom of opposition to press claims upon him which I myself in his position might be unwilling to grant. I am not, therefore, going to say anything which will embarrass the right hon. Gentleman, and certainly nothing which will alter the character of this debate, happily contrasting, as I think, with some previous discussions on similar subjects, for on this occasion there has been no disposition in any part of the House, as far as I have heard the discussion, and I have only been away for a few minutes, to try to turn any sort of Party or personal capital out of the debate, or to use—for that is what it comes to—the purse of the taxpayers to pay the private debts of a Member of Parliament. But I want for a few moments to call the attention of the Committee to the position in which we are placed. The right hon. Gentleman said that he did not regard it as his duty to defend or criticise the action of the Committee upstairs; he considered that it was his duty merely to adopt their proposals. I must enter a *caveat* as to that view of a Minister's responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman may very fairly say that, having appointed this Committee, he considers it right to adopt their conclusions, but if he adopts their conclusions he is bound to defend them. He cannot thrust the Ministerial responsibility from himself to the Committee; from the moment that he adopts their findings they become his decisions; he must take the responsibility for them, and he must defend them. I do not imagine that really there is much difference between us on the subject. It is perhaps nothing more than the use of an ambiguous phrase on the part of the right hon. Gentleman rather than any desire to disclaim his responsibility. But I enter a protest and say that what a Minister does whenever he accepts advice from other people he becomes responsible for. He becomes responsible for the action which he takes upon that advice, and he cannot divest himself of that responsibility in appointing this Committee and in bringing forward this Vote in order to carry out in full their recommendations. The right hon. Gentleman desired, as many of his predecessors desired before him, to settle this question—not finally, for, of course, wages must vary from time to time, but to provide an enduring settlement of the long-outstanding agitation and grievances, and, above all, to adopt in full the recommendations of a tribunal which would carry weight with all parties. The right hon. Gentleman said that he had always held that the State should be a model employer of labour. I think I agree with him, but the words "model employer of labour" are a little ambiguous. If it means better than anyone else in the country I should differ from him.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I said good employers of labour.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I thought he said model, but if he means by good employers that the State should be in the front rank of employers of labour, I do not think there is a Member of this House who would challenge that decision; and although I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman who spoke last, that the more that is voted for the public service the more I am pleased, or that their demands are never unreasonable, or that every one who is a Civil servant ought to receive some benefit from the hands of the Government at the present time, I am at one, I believe, with every member of the Committee that the State should pay to those whom it employs what the best private employer would pay in similar circumstances. But we ought not to pay more. We certainly ought not to be in advance of everybody else, and we ought not to be behind the best that is done—in that sense we ought to be amongst the best. We ought not to pay, however, more than the best, because that is to tax all those who are not members of the Civil Service in order to give members of the Civil Service a privileged position; and although I agree that they should get as good a position as they can obtain in similar employment with private people, I do not desire that the public service should be made a special and privileged class and receive advantages at the hands of men much worse off than themselves more than they could hope to get from private employers. In saying these things, for which I almost apologise to the Committee, because I am repeating what are almost platitudes, I believe I am stating what are the rules which everyone in this House wishes to follow in matters of this kind. The real question is, how are we, as a House, to apply those rules? The right hon. Gentleman said that he hoped by the Vote which he put upon the Paper to-day and by the expansion of that Vote which will follow in subsequent years to close the agitation in the postal service; that we should have adopted the proposals of a tribunal by which all were bound and which everyone, taxpayer and workman alike, would recognise as being a decision that must command every respect as being that of a well-informed, impartial body, possessed of the full evidence of the facts of the case. After listening to the discussion to-day the right hon. Gentleman can no longer indulge that hope; indeed he himself has shown that he has been disappointed in his opening speech, for he said that from almost every section of the Civil Service concerned he had had representations protesting against some part of the proposals which he has made. I cannot, Sir, under your ruling, and I regret that the Rules of the House impose upon you the necessity of that ruling, go into any suggestions for another tribunal, but I take this opportunity in a discussion without Party feeling and without warmth to express my earnest conviction that we have not yet arrived at a satisfactory method of settling this question; that we have not yet discovered a tribunal which commands the respect of all concerned, taxpayers and employees alike, because we have not yet discovered a tribunal which public opinion regards as either competent or impartial. I wish to add my tribute to what has been said as to the labours of the Committee. Although I disapproved of the whole proceeding, I think you could not have had a Committee which would have devoted itself more to this matter or taken more pains to arrive at a proper solution. I cannot myself follow all their recommendations for and against, nor do I think if they had sat for another fifteen days they could have come to any other conclusion. I do not think you could have got a Committee to do the work better, but I noted that the hon. Member for Stoke who sat upon that Committee and who with his colleagues gave endless time to this matter, said that if he had had more experience of this House he would not have joined the Committee, and he did not think we should ever see him on such a Committee again. I venture to call the attention of the Committee to that statement of an hon. Member not unfriendly to the Civil servants and not unwilling to give his services to this House. I commend the judgment on a Committee of this kind to the Committee. I cannot discuss the details of the Committee, but I hope to take the earliest opportunity possible of raising this question and of making a suggestion which I hope the Government will consider, not as regards the Post Office only, but also other branches of the Civil Service. I will make that suggestion in a non-Party spirit and I will beg the House and the Government to consider it in the same way, for we could do no greater service to the Civil servants of the country or to this House than to remove the question of the payment of Civil servants from the arena of Party strife.

*SIR FRANCIS EDWARDS (Radnor) said that if the Postmaster-General could find an impartial tribunal to deal with the question of wages and the conditions of employment of the Post Office officials or any Government officials he would render to the State a service the value of which could hardly be estimated. The great difficulty in this matter had been to find a tribunal that would satisfy all concerned and do justice to the public. He had heard the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman opposite with great interest, because such a tribunal would only be too satisfactory to this House. He himself was one of those who sat on this Committee in company with the hon. Member for Hoxton, and when that hon. Gentleman was speaking it would have puzzled anybody to have known from the remarks he made that he had been a member of the Committee. The hon. Gentleman referred to the difference in the pay of the employees in the Threadneedle Street and the Lombard Street Offices. That difference and its cause were well known to the Committee. The officials employed in the Lombard Street Office were what were known as counter clerks, and came in a different category to those employed at Threadneedle Street. They came from the Central Telegraph Office which was the largest of the kind in the whole world, and where the clerks served under different conditions. The staff in that office was being reduced, and the opportunities of promotion lessened; but the advantages they were losing were being made up by means of this extra pay. The ground covered by the Committee was very varied and the Committee claimed that they acted fully up to the terms of their reference. They had made a painsstaking effort to do substantial justice to all concerned. The Postmaster-General had made so clear a statement as to what had been the result of the recommendations that there was very little in the matter of detail with which he need trouble the House. The Committee had improved the conditions of the service all through. Their recommendations gave a distinct advance in pay to all the officials in the Post Office. He did not say that they were great advances individually in any instances, but it had to be remembered that the Committee of 1906 did not stand alone in dealing with the pay of the Post Office officials and servants. That question was dealt with by Mr. Fawcett in 1881, by Mr. Raikes in 1891, by the Tweedmouth Commission in 1897, and by Lord Stanley in 1905. All those revisions taken together had given an increase of pay amounting to £1,500,000. He knew they had been blamed for what they had done, for he saw the official publications of the staff, but he was glad to see that one called the *Postmaster* had in its November issue done them some justice. The scale so far as they were considering it, and he believed the Committee was unanimous on this point, was as a whole satisfactory so far as the maximum was concerned. Complaints had been made that there had been no advance in the maximum scale for seventeen years, and that during that period the work had increased and prices had risen. But although it was quite true the work had increased in individual offices he did not know that the work of each individual had increased. As to the rise in prices, he did not think that people in employment outside Government offices had been able to use the rise in prices as a lever to obtain higher wages. Nor did the Board of Trade Returns for 1905 justify the argument of the rise in prices. The hon. Member for Stoke had referred to this matter, and he was glad the hon. Member had brought the matter forward because the bases of the Committee's recommendations were the actual volume of work and the cost of living. After all, rent was not the largest item. Food was the largest and that had not increased very largely in price. But the scale was not considered satisfactory so far as the minimum was concerned, and the Committee were greatly indebted to the hon. Members for Stockport and for Stoke for the assistance they gave in this matter. The minimum scale recommended by the Committee gave increases where they were most needed. They gave them in the first few years after entrance into the service. He thought the rise which the Committee had given in the minimum scale had given very real relief to those entering the service. Further matters had been referred to by the Postmaster-General. One of those, which the Postmaster-General referred to, and was known as the technical increment, was now increased to 3s. a week, and carried beyond the maximum. Then under the old scale a man who entered the service when he was over the age of twenty-one entered it at the pay of a man who entered at nineteen, namely, 20s. a week. But in future such a man would receive the pay of a man of 21 years, namely, 26s. a week. It was his opinion that the wages and conditions of service compared not unfavourably with those that obtained in outside employment. He knew that view was not held by the staff. They were disappointed, and had expressed their disappointment vigorously. He was sorry for their disappointment, but in dealing with so vast a concern as the Post Office, with thousands of employees, it was not unnatural that the decision come to should have left some amount of disappointment. The real trouble they had to face was that the Postal Department had grown so rapidly and extended so much as to create complications and inequalities which had all the appearance of grievances. If they were to deal *de novo* with the whole matter, they would aim at simplicity and regularity, but it was absolutely impossible now owing to the complexity and number of classes in the postal service. The Committee had two main considerations to bear in mind. On the one hand they had to give a fair and sympathetic hearing to the grievances the staff complained of. Some of the grievances showed proper ground for redress. But they had to bear in mind also that the Committee were responsible to the public, and that there was a difference between the State and a private employer. He quite agreed that they all desired that the public service should give to those employed in it the best conditions and advantages which could be obtained from a model employer. At the same time it was only right and proper to say that the State should not take advantage of what was practically a monopoly to pay wages and to establish conditions of labour which would be in any way unjust to the public at large, or to private employers. The Hobhouse Committee had had a very difficult task to perform, and might claim that on the whole it had given substantial advantages to the men, and redressed many grievances which were justly complained of.

*SIR C. HILL (Shrewsbury) wished as a member of the Committee to express the great satisfaction which he felt at the Postmaster-General's intention to carry out the recommendations which they had submitted. The terms of reference did not allow of their considering the whole reorganisation of the service. All they were called upon to do was to consider the position of Post Office servants as compared with those of other employees of large firms. Personally he thought the conditions of service of the employees of the Government were very largely in their favour, so largely that they carried a very strong preponderance of advantage in their behalf. The very fact that a body of servants could come before that House with their grievances differentiated their position from that of all other employees. He did not know what would happen if the employees of big firms were to say they were entitled to bring their grievances before the House of Commons. He supposed the employers would decline to listen to them. They would have only to refer to one head of their department, and on him would depend entirely whether they continued in his service or left it. But any employee of the Government could, by bringing his case before his Member, ensure its being brought before Parliament, and there were many questions of that kind which were certain to have full consideration from the House. That was a very strong argument in favour of the conditions of service under the Government which gave Post Office servants an advantage over many other branches of service. The great leniency which was always shown in Government Departments in dealing with any cases which required consideration was a very strong argument in favour of Post Office servants. He knew it had always been supposed, and many servants of the Post Office considered that they had grievances and were not able to bring their cases before their employers, and that if they could come face to face with them they would be better treated, and would be able to represent their case more favourably than they could at present. But he did not feel that that was so. It was very uncertain whether, when brought face to face with their employers, they would gain very much by it. The Committee had tried to be as impartial as possible, and as far as he could observe all its members had served without any personal bias, and with a wish to do the best they could for the body of servants. They had tried in fact to get up to the motto of one of the organs of the Post Office servants, to be "just without fear." He claimed on behalf of the Committee that they were so, and whatever faults might be found in their recommendations they had an honest wish to hold the scales level between the public and a very efficient and useful body of public servants. He thought they really did a very great deal for the service not only in the way of giving them their wages but in various other ways. What they had endeavoured to do was to remove all the smaller grievances—the pin-pricks of the service—as well as add substantially to the wages. They had actually improved the conditions with regard to their sick leave, night duty, and Bank Holidays. The question of medical attendance they had also settled in a way to give satisfaction to the Post Office employees. Men who under the old system could not claim the attendance of any doctor in the circle in which they worked could now get a medical certificate from the doctor nearest their own homes. That was itself a very great boon. Then they had dwelt very largely upon questions of sanitary inspection which was a great advantage to the health of the staff. They had insisted also upon rapidity of building work, and that when works were required which would give greater facilities to the staff they should be carried out more quickly. They had also dealt with the question of secret reports. That was a burning question on which Post Office servants felt they were not always fairly treated. They found there was really no grievance, and that the so-called secret reports were practically reports on the position of the men, which were absolutely necessary. In regard to wages they had substantially improved the position of the men. He hoped the Report would be carried through without any dissentient voice, and though it would add largely to future Estimates he was sure there were very few who would grudge the advantage which would come from the decisions of the Committee to a most deserving body of public servants.

*MR. WARDLE (Stockport) said he supposed the Select Committee on the postal service was on its trial. It was true there was still some dissatisfaction with the Report expressed throughout the various branches of the service. He had listened with some degree of curiosity to the right hon. Gentleman who had himself been Postmaster-General, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, as to what he had to say. It was true no Committee of that House, probably no committee appointed outside the House, could entirely satisfy any body either of public servants or workmen of any description. He did not think that was a matter of regret entirely. But when the right hon. Gentleman laid his proposals before the House with regard to civil servants they on that side would scrutinise them with a friendly but also a critical eye. The difficulty with regard to all branches of the Civil Service was that there was no entirely similar employment outside, and if they were going to erect a standard of wages and conditions in the Civil Service similar to those outside, they would find themselves in a difficulty at once. The hon. Member for Clare had made certain charges against the Committee with regard to not accepting evidence.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I ruled that out of order.

*MR. WARDLE said that so far as the conditions of the men who worked on the travelling Post Office between Ireland and England were concerned the chairman of the Committee himself travelled with the Post Office in order to see the actual working. He accepted without any reservation the attitude of the Postmaster-General to this Report. The Report was the result of a large amount of careful consideration by a Committee composed of all sections of the House. Each Party was represented on it, and although they had arrived at a decision mainly by consent, and although some of those decisions were not entirely approved of by the whole of the members of the Committee, yet on the whole they might say it was the established opinion of the Committee. There were certain conditions inherent in the Civil Service which were quite different from outside employment. There were prohibitions as well as privileges, and the question of the privileges must be set against the prohibitions. Permanent employment also carried with it these prohibitions. Civil rights had been denied to Civil servants because of their employment. It had been felt in the past to be right to deny that privilege. In his opinion such denial ought not any longer to obtain. The political pressure which these various associations——

*THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to stop the hon. Member, but here again he is discussing a wide question of policy which does not arise on the Supplementary Estimates.

*MR. WARDLE said there were certain disciplinary measures which arose out of permanent employment such as punishment, fines, deferment of increment, and deferment of promotion, with all of which the Committee had had to deal. It was their object in dealing with this to see that the staff which was in a permanent position had proper opportunities of bringing its grievances to the Department. With regard to the question of wages, which after all was the main question which arose on the Report, they had sought to improve the position of the men below the age of twenty-five. It was that which induced them to fix the age pay in the case of the indoor staff at twenty-one and that of the outdoor staff at twenty-two. This improved the position of every class in the service. The question whether they had given every individual person some advantage or other was of course another matter altogether, but this particular provision improved the position of every class throughout the service, and gave the improvement at the time it was most needed, when the men needed to save with the object of getting married. They had also improved the maximum rates in the case of postmen, of the female staff and the engineering staff generally. It was intended that this should reach practically every member of these classes. Their intention was that almost all the postmen and the female and engineering staffs should practically get a rise on their maximum. It might not have been a big rise, but it was intended that they should all get it. He was glad that, taking it on the whole, the Report had been received by the Postmaster-General and the Department with satisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman had accepted and decided to work to the Report, and although there were some questions of interpretation on which he should differ, he welcomed the decision. The question of the classification of towns was the most important part of the Report that was left, and if there was any great amount of dissatisfaction after the Report was put in force it would be because of this re-classification. The Committee had drawn up certain scales of pay which were intended to improve the position of postmen throughout the United Kingdom, and they had swept away the ridiculous anomaly that Ireland was to be paid at lower rates than the rest of the United Kingdom. If this classification was not satisfactory there would be a great amount of discontent. The Postmaster-General had just issued a circular which had got to the staff in various parts of the country. He regretted in one way that it was not issued even earlier. It had already had the effect of bringing telegrams to many Members of the House, and messages pointing out the particular district which was going to be adversely affected by this new classification. The real reason for this difference had been explained largely by the Postmaster-General, but there were one or two things which he had omitted. Previous to the Report there were seven classes of sorting clerks and telegraphists in the country, and there were seven classes of postmen, but these classes did not synchronise. They were not uniform, and the object of the Committee was to bring a uniform set of classes and reduce them from seven to five. The new classification indicated by the Postmaster-General in the circular had had, so far as he could see, the extraordinary effect of entirely subverting the intentions of the Committee. It had increased or was increasing in many places the maximum of the sorting clerks and telegraphists, and it was reducing the maximum of the postmen in those places. It had been said that it would not affect the present individuals who were working in these particular places. He agreed that it would not, but no one liked to see the *status* of his office reduced unless there was sufficient ground for its being done. The recommendation of the Committee was that the volume of work plus the cost of living should be the basis upon which these places should be classified. Personally, he had protested against this method being adopted, but he was overruled; but he could see the difficulties that were going to arise then, and they were now having experience of what those difficulties were. The volume of work had been adopted as the criterion of indoor work, but it was no criterion for outdoor work at all. The question of how many units of work passed through the office did not settle how much work the postman did. It might be said that the original classification was better, and he agreed that it would have been better not to have interfered than to make a mess of it. He found that out of seventeen units of work in the Post Office classification there were only three that had any reference whatever to outside work at all. But the difficulty was greater than that. If they took the volume of work and the cost of living, how were they going to get a common denominator? What emphasis were they going to put upon the cost of living and what upon the work? He agreed that it would have been very much better indeed for the Postmaster-General to hold his hand for some time with regard to this new classification. The anomalies which were being produced already were very great. A new kind of criteria must be established before any satisfactory results could be arrived at. What were the anomalies? Let them take Woolwich, which was on the borders of London. It was actually being reduced for the future, and new entrants for postmen were only to go up to 27s. a week. They went up to 30s. before. Over the border in Blackheath they went up to 33s. Such an anomaly as that produced by this result surely condemned the method as it had been put in force at present. There were many other anomalies. He found that at

Skipton the probability was that the sorting clerks and telegraphists would go up 8s. and the postmen come down 2s. on the maximum. The remedy in the Woolwich case was comparatively easy. Woolwich was part of London and ought to be paid on the London scale. The defect of the new system was that it did not give postmen the advance intended. It reduced the maximum of future entrants and mortgaged the future to pay for the present. They found from the Postmaster-General's circular that London postmen were to receive an estimated immediate advance during the present year of £46,500 a year. That was very good, but the ultimate advance was only to be £28,700, so that there was actually to be a saving on the postmen's wages, and the future was to pay for the present. It might be said that this did not affect the present staff. He thought it was better that the matter should be settled so far as they could settle it once and for all at the present time. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would pay particular attention to the matter of reclassification, because if he did not he himself could foresee a future agitation, greater than the past had ever known. It had been said that nobody would suffer. There was a sense in which some of them would suffer. The idea of the Committee was that all the scales of the postmen should be advanced a shilling a week at their maximum. Those who did not get that shilling by comparison with those who did would suffer. It would be said that they anticipated that the modifications of the recommendations of the Committee would be considerable. He agreed, but they did not anticipate and they never intended that the maximum wages of the postmen in these particular towns should be reduced. When the Committee framed the scales they did it with the idea that postmen with 26s. maximum should get 27s. They expected that in a few odd cases possibly that might not be done, but they never anticipated the wholesale reductions of the maxima which apparently were to be effected under the reclassification. He wanted to make this particular point clear because he was sure that the results of this Report would have no effect in satisfying the postal service throughout the country if these reductions were carried out. This was the most important question which had been raised on the Estimates that day. He was very pleased that the right hon. Gentleman had recognised the trade union. There were many things in the Report not yet clear, and they would have to be settled between the right hon. Gentleman and the representatives of the staff. He trusted that those representatives would take full advantage of their opportunities of settling matters in that direction. There were only two other points to which he desired to refer. The Committee had been blamed because it did not undertake the immense task of recommending the reorganisation of the Post Office on certain lines. He had read in the newspapers that such reorganisation was to be a plank in the programme in the future. He did not think it was within the terms of reference that the Committee should undertake such a task. The reorganisation of the Department would involve considerable work, and he was glad that the Committee of which he was a member had not to undertake it. He thought the most important reform with regard to the Post Office which could be adopted would be not only to cut the ties which bound it to the Office of Works, but also the ties which bound it to the Treasury. The Post Office ought to be a business department run on business lines, having its own *personnel* and paying its own staff, and then if it made any profit let it be handed over to the Treasury. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would seriously consider the question of the reclassification and keep it over as long as he could until all the factors in the problem had been carefully thought out, for he did not think they had yet been considered sufficiently.

*MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) congratulated the Postmaster-General in this age of economy on the success he had achieved in laying the scheme, before the Committee. It was a scheme which, on this Estimate, meant an increased expenditure of £250,000, next year it would be £500,000, and ultimately £750,000. He thought that was a tribute to the Committee, and the reasonable recommendations they had made. He wished to get an explanation from the Postmaster-General on a particular point. He could not understand the principle on which the allocation with regard to the maximum salary of telegraphists had been fixed. The right hon. Gentleman had said that afternoon that he had taken into account the cost of living and the volume of work. The telegraphists at the Central Office got an increase of 3s. a week. There was a readjustment of the maxima of telegraphists in every class with one exception, and that exception included the class which found its location in Edinburgh. Therefore, he spoke with some knowledge of the grievances which were felt in certain parts of England and Scotland, but more particularly in Edinburgh, having regard to the cost of living. This class of civil servant had had no increase in maximum wage since 1890, and the cost of living had considerably increased since then. He would specially bring to the notice of the Postmaster-General the fact that according to the Board of Trade Report the cost of living in London was only 2 per cent. higher than the cost of living in Edinburgh. Wages in this class in Edinburgh as compared with London were lower to the extent of £24 a year, being a difference of 16 per cent. He was sure that the work performed in each office was the same. Having regard to these percentages as to the cost of living, he could not understand how the volume of work could make this difference in their maximum salary. He hoped that this was one of the questions which the right hon. Gentleman would leave over, and that while wishing to conform to the recommendations of the Committee, he would leave it open to himself to consider what appeared to him to be a necessary revision. He hoped, at least, that the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give an explanation as to how this discrepancy had arisen.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) understood from the Report of the Committee that in almost every case the maximum wage had been increased and the conditions improved. But there were some places where both the maximum and minimum had been reduced. In his own constituency there was a great deal of disappointment, and not without cause, because when comparisons were made with places such as Manchester and York it was clearly shown that in dear-living places such as he represented the maximum should be increased. He had received a letter from the postal employees at Darlington emphatically protesting against the findings of the Committee. Everybody on the Opposition side always appreciated the courtesy of the Postmaster-General, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would look into the matter and see if something could not be done. He was sure everybody appreciated the great services rendered by the Committee, and felt that they had not received adequate thanks for their arduous labours.

*MR. WOOD (Glasgow, St. Rollox) supported the appeal of his hon. friends the Member for Stockport, the Member for East Edinburgh and others, namely, that the Postmaster-General would take into very careful consideration the question of the classification of towns. He believed this question affected a great many large towns, in both England and Scotland, and, in particular, it affected the town which he had the honour to represent. He understood that it was intended to increase the maximum of telegraphists in London by 3s. per week, making it 65s. The maximum of the telegraphists in Glasgow who were doing similar work was to be left at the figure at which it had stood for eighteen years, namely, 56s. per week. There was, therefore, a difference of 16 per cent. On the principle laid down by the Committee, the salary should depend on the amount of work and the cost of living. He agreed with the hon. Member for Stockport that the first criterion was open to criticism. No doubt there was some justice in applying the criterion as to the cost of living. The question of work did not arise in this case. The work to be done in Glasgow was precisely the same as in London. He found from the Board of Trade Return that in regard to the principal commodities there was very little difference between prices in London and in Glasgow. There was a difference in the matter of house rent in favour of Glasgow. But according to the Board of Trade Return the combined figure showed a difference of only 6 per cent. in favour of Glasgow as compared with London. That certainly did not warrant a difference of 16 per cent. in wages. They all recognised the Postmaster-General's desire to bring about equality in this matter, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would respond to the appeal which had been made by so many Members that he should reconsider the question of the classification of the different towns.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said he had listened to the debate with mixed feelings. If anybody imagined that all the Post Office employees of the country would rejoice at the findings of the Committee, he was mistaken. The hon. Member for Stoke had said that if the classification was not satisfactory there would be trouble, and he desired also to say a few words on that point. The Postmaster-General had stated that the Government ought to be a good employer, and he wanted to show that if the recommendations of the Committee as to classification were carried out the Government was going to be far from a good employer. In Sunderland the minimum wage was going to be reduced from 19s. a week to 17s., and the maximum from 28s. to 25s. per week. They had been told that this was to be brought about by taking the amount of work performed and the cost of living in particular towns. He had gone very carefully into the Board of Trade Report on the cost of living, and he could not find any vestige of justification for the extreme treatment meted out to the Post Office servants in the town of Sunderland. According to the Board of Trade Return, in this town, which was noted for what was known as its cottage properties, they were told that a one-roomed tenement house could be got for from 1s. 6d. to 2s.; a two-roomed house from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per week; a three-roomed house for from 3s. 6d. to 5s.; and a four-roomed house from 5s. to 7s.; and a five-roomed house for 8s. per week. Yet in the same Board of Trade Report on which the Return as to house rents was based it was stated that in the poorest area of the town, where the corporation had built working-class tenements, they had to pay for a two-roomed house from 3s. 9d. to 4s.; for a three-roomed house from 4s. 9d. to 5s. On the figures first quoted the Postal Department based their calculation of cost of living. The dwellings which the Corporation of Sunderland had built were let at a loss every year, and if they had desired to obtain a revenue from the property the rents would have been considerably higher than at the present time. He had had a letter that day from Sunderland, which stated that thirteen Post Office servants paid rents from 5s. 3d. to 6s. 10½d. for a three-roomed house, and fourteen paid from 6s. 4½d. to 9s. 3d. for a four-roomed house, and two-roomed houses were rented at 4s. 6d. to 5s. 3d. by postmen. Therefore under the head of rents, the Report of the Board of Trade was misleading and ought not to be put forward as a justification for reducing the classification of the Post Office employees in Sunderland. He would like to know from whom the reporter to the Board of Trade got his information? Had he ever taken the trouble to look at the houses? As to cost of living in Sunderland, it was stated by the Board of Trade Report that it was on the whole a little lower than in London—94 per cent. as against 100 per cent. But what was the difference in wages to be? In Sunderland a minimum of 17s. and a maximum of 25s. per week as against about 31s. rising to 35s. in London. In other words, the cost of living in Sunderland was only, on their own showing, 6 per. cent. lower than in London, while the wages to be paid in London were much above those to be paid in Sunderland. Then it was stated that if coal was excluded the cost of living in Sunderland was equal to the cost of living of Post Office employees in London, yet, as he had said, the wages of the latter were much ahead of Sunderland. He insisted that there was no justification whatever for the Postmaster-General taking the extreme step he had done in regard to classification in Sunderland. His argument was that if the Committee were so far wrong in regard to their findings in the case of Sunderland, they were similarly wrong in regard to other parts of the country. At any rate, he could see no reason why the Committee should arrive at the conclusion that living in a town twelve miles distant from Sunderland should cost 5s. per week more for the same class of employees. To say that living was higher in York, Derby, Norwich, Carlisle, and Bath than in Sunderland was absurd in the extreme. As to the payment on the unit system, he would take Devonport, which was an Army and Navy town, where the money orders dealt with must be very large. A money order counted there as ten units as against one for a letter. There were only periodic states of pressure and the work was dealt with by a staff working overtime. It was not fair to include such work for the purposes of comparison with such a town as Sunderland, and the same applied to any garrison town or naval station, which, apart from those circumstances, might be important, and the work was more regular. He was not going to advise the employees in Sunderland to accept for a single moment the findings of the Committee under any possible consideration. Those findings were absolutely incorrect, and they ought not to take such a large sum of money per week from the men of Sunderland. More equal wages ought to be paid. Talk of paying a Post Office employee from 17s. to 25s. a week; why, an ordinary labourer was paid 6d. per hour in Sunderland, or 25s. a week, without any responsibility whatever! In that town the tram conductors were paid 28s. 3d. per week, and yet it was held that the Post Office was an ideal service! He appealed to the Postmaster-General that before finally adopting this classification system he should consider the matter again very seriously. If the right hon. Gentleman analysed the figures on which the Report was based he would find that there was no justification for taking the extreme step he had done as to Sunderland.

*MR. SEAVERNS (Lambeth, Brixton) said he did not propose to enter into the vexed question of classification, nor to pass any criticism on the Postmaster-General, who had rightly described his task in interpreting the Report of the Committee as a most difficult and delicate one. The right hon. Gentleman was on reasonably safe ground when he pointed out that the Committee had been set up after a long continued and most vociferous demand on the part of the Post Office employees of the country. He, however, would press on the right hon. Gentleman that a Committee dealing with an enormous variety of topics and a great number of postal and telegraph employees, must in the nature of things bring in a Report in which there would be some inaccuracies, some anomalies, and some inconsistencies. He suggested to the right hon. Gentleman, and he trusted he would he supported by the House, that a liberal interpretation should be given to that Report so that hon. Members might have a reasonable and fair prospect of arriving at a final settlement of this difficult matter. There were two points which he wished to press upon the right hon. Gentleman's attention. The first had reference to the technical equipment of telegraphists. As he understood it, the form of test now required was first class in magnetism, and second class in telegraphy. The Committee recommended a "searching test" as a proof of technical efficiency, but the test which was adopted was not one set up by them, but by a Secretarial Committee of the Post Office, and it required first class in magnetism, first class in telegraphy, and first class in telephony, which was a very high and critical test indeed. He was informed that the manipulation test was so severe that more than 90 per cent. of the telegraphists could not pass it.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON dissented.

*MR. SEAVERNS said he was glad his right hon. friend entertained that view, and, of course, he accepted what he said, but the information put before him by gentlemen who he thought were technical experts in the matter was that the test was one which could not be passed by an enormous majority of those who were now engaged in the telegraphic service. He would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to deal with that point either now or in his remarks later, because those for whom he was speaking were not desirous of being carping or critical, or unjust in the criticisms which they might pass upon the Report or the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation of it. He might further remind the right hon. Gentleman, if he would allow him that a deputation waited upon him representing those interested, and they went away with a strong impression on their minds that the right hon. Gentleman so far as existing employees—telegraphists now in the employ of the Post Office—were concerned, would not require them to pass a more difficult test than that which was now imposed. He would further point out that while he entirely accepted the right hon. Gentleman's ground that he was bound to follow the recommendations of the Hobhouse Committee, this was not a question of accepting those recommendations, but purely one of how they should be interpreted, and the details of the way in which they should be carried out. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give them some assurance on that point. The second point he had to raise was that there had been an increase given in the maximum of the telegraphists in the Central Office, London, but that increase did not apply to the telegraphists in the district offices in London. He was dealing only with London because he was particularly interested in it. He should like to ask whether the telegraphists engaged in the district offices did not pass the same examinations, were not required to live up to precisely the same standard of efficiency; did they not have the same hours of work; were they not put under the same conditions of employment, and did they not have to bear the same cost of living. That was an anomaly which he ventured to say was one of the very gross and glaring anomalies of the Report. It did not surprise him, because it seemed to him that a Report dealing with so vast a subject must necessarily contain some anomalies and inconsistencies. He would appeal to his right hon. friend to give some reply also on this point, otherwise a great injustice would be done to a great body of deserving men.

*MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he did not desire to detain the House for more than a few moments, but he wished to press the right hon. Gentleman for some answer to the representations which had been made to him with regard to the different towns in Great Britain with reference to telegraphists. They had heard that a rise of 3s. a week had been given to the telegraphists in the London Central Office, and the Select Committee, whose arduous labours had now finished, had made some recommendations with regard to the provinces; but they had neglected six very large towns, Edinburgh, Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. In those towns these unfortunate people still remained at the same maximum which was given to them in, and which had been in existence since, 1890. They had heard a good deal about the cost of living, and he was not disposed to enter into the question as to the difference between the cost of living in any one of these towns and London, but it was apparent that a telegraphist living in a town such as Birmingham, which had heavy rates, where there were few houses in the immediate vicinity of the Post Office, and when he had to go and live outside the town and make the travelling expenses to and from his work part of his daily living, was, in that respect, sometimes very much worse off than his brethren in London. The Select Committee stated that the reason why they gave this 3s. to London telegraphists was to compensate them for slowness in promotion as compared with other employees in the Post Office. But that applied equally well to the provinces as to London. At the present moment he believed there were 82, and in the current year there would be 100, telegraphists who had served for twenty years in the Post Office at Birmingham who would have to remain at 56s. instead of getting the rise which their more fortunate brethren in London would obtain. Might he ask the right hon. Gentleman to compare that with the rate of wage paid by the great cable companies, who had no monopoly, who had to pay a dividend to their shareholders and run the risk of competition? He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give these points his consideration. The Postmaster-General should remember that the Committee recommended an increase of £52 a year to the junior engineer clerks, which was to take in and include the cost of living, and he asked why should the telegraphist be excluded. There was one other point he would refer to in regard to the classification. There was a town of considerable importance in the Midlands—Wolverhampton—which he did not find mentioned in the classification at all. There in a large and growing town these persons had to serve for 48s. a week, and were not so well off even as the first people he had mentioned in Birmingham. The right hon. Gentleman was not bound hand and foot by the Report of the Committee so that he could not consider the matter in detail, and he trusted that he would give the consideration which it deserved to the case of these deserving persons to whom he had referred.

*MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead) said his speech would be a very brief one, but he desired to emphasise one point which had been put with regard to the classification. He would only put the case of the town which he represented, which was quite natural, because he knew it best. Birkenhead adjoins Liverpool and it was strange therefore that the postmen of Birkenhead by this classification should be reduced 3s. below Liverpool.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Not existing postmen.

*MR. VIVIAN said he quite understood about the existing postmen, but at any rate the standard would be lowered by 3s.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON dissented.

*MR. VIVIAN said there was no difference at all between the cost of living in Birkenhead and in Liverpool; indeed, he thought it could be proved that as far as certain things were concerned they could be obtained more cheaply in Liverpool. It seemed to him that the Committee had endeavoured to do an impossible thing, and that was to get a general rule which would fit all circumstances, with the result that they had got all these inequalities. He pressed the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider the matter. This rule to solve all the difficulties was not one which worked equitably in different towns. It did not work equitably in Birkenhead, where they would have this strange condition of things. A postman working at Liverpool might live at Birkenhead, and he would have the higher standard, but a postman working at Birkenhead might live at Liverpool and he would have the lower standard. The fact was that it was for most economic purposes one town. It was not two towns, and it was impossible for men working in the postal department of the two places in this way to meet each other day by day and to settle down to the inequality he referred to. He did not join in any threat on behalf of the postmen, because he believed that if their principles were pressed constitutionally and reasonably the right hon. Gentleman and those who worked with him would discover some method of getting over those exceptions to the general rule which the Committee had tried to work out under this scheme.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think I may as well deal with the points which have been already raised, although I shall be glad to answer further questions if they are asked. I will deal with the question of my hon. friend the Member for Brixton, who did not, I think, hear my opening remarks, because I dealt very fully with the subject he referred to from his point of view, namely, a technical allowance. The Committee recommended that there should be a searching test which should be a *bona fide* test of ability. This obviously means that the present examination, which is an easy one should be made much stiffer than it is. This is not a question upon which I can pronounce an opinion, having no technical knowledge of how far the examination test which we have proposed is fair and reasonable. My own view is that those telegraphists who are anxious and desire to show their ability and to put their back into their work should be able to pass the test. I am advised that of the present telegraphists a very considerable number can pass this test, but it is a matter of experiment both in regard to the examination and the nature of the test, and I shall keep it under my attention and if I find it is too high I shall certainly consider the question of lowering it.

*MR. SEAVERNS inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider that men of forty or fifty years who had been fifteen or twenty years in the service lost some of the elasticity of youth.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am afraid the hon. Gentleman was not attending to what I was saying. The question is how many men will pass. My hon. friend said only 10 per cent. I have no desire to impose such a test as that. I will take the whole matter under my observation and see that it is properly carried out. But I desire to make this clear, that we accept the recommendation of the Committee that the test shall be a real test of the technical knowledge of telegraphy. Then my hon. friend asked as to the position of the country telegraphists as apart from those in the Central Telegraph Office. All I can say with regard to the various questions raised by my hon. friends behind me, and opposite, in this regard, is that I must found myself on the recommendations of the Committee on this point. They had evidence before them on the question. They considered it very carefully and made definite recommendations. In regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for Brixton this is the decision of the Committee, paragraph 227—

> "Taking into consideration the fact that the nature of the work and the hours of duty are less onerous for male counter clerks and telegraphists in the Metropolitan area than they are for telegraphists in the Central Telegraph Office your Committee are of opinion that the present maximum for counter clerks and telegraphists is adequate."

That is definite, and we are acting on that recommendation. The same applies to the case of the large towns to which my attention has been drawn. The Committee took evidence on the point. At paragraph 247 they say—

> "Evidence was tendered to your Committee on behalf of the staff at the six largest offices, and also on behalf of the other offices 'divided' and 'amalgamated' by the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association, by the United Kingdom Postal Clerks' Association, and by the Association of Irish Post Office Clerks."

And with that before them, and the evidence given by the Central Telegraph Office, they came to this conclusion, that taking into consideration the facts of the conditions of service in the Central Telegraph Office the scale of payment for officers entering the class of established telegraphist at the Central Telegraph Office should be a scale which raises their maximum pay by 3s. a week. I take it that one of the chief reasons why they made that increase was that they proceeded to reduce the number of superior places in the Central Telegraph Office. An hon. Gentleman opposite said that the chances of promotion were no better in some of the large towns than they were in the Central Telegraph Office. It was on that, as I understand their Report, that the Committee largely based their proposals for increase, because in paragraph 420 they say—

> "The number of supervising posts already existing in connection with the Central Telegraph Office is excessive and they should in future be strictly limited in numbers and should consist only of specially efficient men selected by stringent tests for both supervising and other duties."

So I take it, judging the Report as a whole, they came to the conclusion, after looking at the whole of the facts, to increase the pay in the Central Telegraph Office and not in the large towns. I am bound to accept the recommendation of the Committee on this point. This is one of the questions to which I referred in my opening remarks. Various classes come to me on one point and another, and if I go beyond the recommendations of the Committee in one matter I cannot refuse to reopen them in another, which would involve the reopening of the whole question. Under the circumstances I found myself on the facts and conclusions arrived at. To those conclusions I adhere.

*MR. McCRAE: Am I to understand that the reason for this difference in the Central Telegraph Office was not the cost of living or the conditions of work, but because there is not now the chance of promotion in the Central Telegraph Office?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Committee came to the conclusion that the duties in the Central Telegraph Office were more onerous in their nature than those in the large towns, and at the same time they were reducing the chance of promotion, and for that reason, I take it, they gave this increase in the one case and not in the other. A great deal has been said about the reclassification. Reclassification is bound to lead to a considerable amount of change in the position of particular towns; and cases where it has resulted in reduction in certain towns have been brought to my attention in this House. I was surprised to hear the hon. Member for Stockport say he himself did not agree with the principle of reclassification; but the Committee in paragraphs 258 and 341 recommended it in most specific and definite terms, and their recommendations I have endeavoured to carry out. The reclassification recommended by the Committee, as I understand, is intended to be on the same basis for the different grades concerned. They take as the basis the units of work plus the cost of living in the various towns. I have no knowledge of the cost of living in any town except such information as is supplied by the Returns of the Board of Trade. But if in any particular place the Board of Trade can be persuaded that they have made a mistake, and they inform me that the cost of living there is either higher or lower than they had stated it to be, that is a case which I should be willing at once to take into consideration in dealing with the classification. My hon. friend the Member for Stoke suggested that when the classification was carried out there should be a revision from time to time. With that I agree. But whether it should be at stated periods or at various times is a matter for consideration. The whole thing is that classification should be determined by the volume of work and cost of living, and if it is shown at any time that the classification no longer corresponds to the facts, then it should be revised.

MR. JOHN WARD: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would fix a time when reclassification should take place.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I hope the hon. Gentleman will not press me as to a particular time now. I think the hon. Member said something about four years, but I see no reason for revision at any particular, definite time. It might be better that it should be less than four years, or sporadic rather than systematic. I should like to consider that. So far as I am concerned I have accepted the definite proposals of the Committee in regard to classification. At present we have several different classifications for different purposes; and if we are going to simplify those classifications obviously the effect must be adverse as well as beneficial. You cannot have unification without some transference from one class to another. I wish to make that quite clear, because I think there has been some misunderstanding about what is taking place. But in this question of classification I can only take as regards the cost of living the Board of Trade Returns, and as regards the application of these Returns to the volume of work, the proposals of the Committee. There were one or two questions raised by other hon. Members, but I do not think they are matters which I need discuss. There was one of great importance to me, but it is a somewhat delicate question. It is that of the relations between the Post Office and the Treasury. It is a very large question, and one somewhat delicate for me to discuss. Naturally, anyone who has fetters upon him would like to have them struck off. That is as far as I can go with the question.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: What about the Office of Works?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think I indicated in my opening statement that that is a matter in which I should probably coincide with the views of the Committee.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked if he might remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Committee made very definite and specific recommendations with regard to the Office of Works. Did he propose to carry them out?

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I said they are recommendations to which we have not yet practically agreed, not having had an opportunity of really considering them, but they are matters to which the various Departments will give consideration with a view to meeting the recommendations of the Select Committee as far as we can. There may be points, of course, on which hon. Members dissent from the recommendations, and possibly from the method with which I have applied them, but I think it is quite clear there is no Party feeling in the question. I think we all feel that in asking the Committee to vote such a large sum there should be practical unanimity.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.) said he wished to draw attention to some recommendations which appeared to have been overlooked. The Select Committee thought that casual labour and the number of auxiliary postmen ought to be restricted, and gradually reduced. The Postmaster-General had made a passing reference to the question, and said it was a very difficult problem. He could not see that there would be any difficulty about a problem of this kind; and, after all, what were Governments for but to solve difficult problems? If the Postmaster-General would only make up his mind to try and solve it, he had very little doubt that he would succeed in doing so. The Committee made an urgent recommendation that the Postmaster-General should pay particular attention to the position of auxiliary postmen in Ireland, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman had taken no notice of it.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Oh yes, I have.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR asked if the right hon. Gentleman had any intention of taking any notice of the recommendation. He did not think he had stated anything to that effect.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Yes, I did. What I said was that my object was to reduce auxiliary labour as much as possible. I cannot reduce it altogether, because of the difficulty of arranging duties. Otherwise, I am entirely in agreement with my hon. friend.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR said he understood that the right hon. Gentleman would like to reduce it, but he asked him if he could not commence to make an effort to do so. He had not heard anyone during the debate make the slightest reference to this auxiliary postman, who appeared to be an outlaw in the service and regarded as a mere cypher. He wished to know if the Postmaster-General had any intention of carrying out the urgent recommendations of the Committee in this matter. In Ireland the position of the auxiliary postman was a very miserable one. He was paid about 4d. per hour, and had to walk from ten to fifteen miles a day in all weathers. Very few of them, he understood, reached 8s. per week. That was really a sweating system. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Government should be a model employer, but that was not a model system of employment which compelled a man to walk from ten to twenty miles a day for hardly 8s. per week. That was not how a good private employer would treat his servants. The Committee mentioned the inclusion of the postal servants in the Workmen's Compensation Act. He wanted to know whether that was the reason the sick pay of auxiliary postmen had been reduced by half. For some years ex-telegraph messengers had been used as auxiliaries. How was it that the Department, after using these telegraph messengers for years and turning them into auxiliary postmen, got rid of them? Was there any better way of swelling the ranks of the unemployed than such treatment? What was to become of these ex-telegraph boys who had been serving as auxiliary postmen? They had no trade or occupation that they could rely upon, and their chances of getting employment were very few. He thought their case ought to be looked into with a view to providing them with some employment in a Government Department. Then the stripe system was a very bad one. It was a clumsy device, and it seemed to him to create a false idea as to the amount of the maximum wages obtainable by postmen. The Postmaster-General's statement appeared to him to be quite illusory and he thought if he looked into the matter he would find that the benefit of the slight alteration was intended for the men who were not yet in the service, and that those who had been in it for many years would get no benefit at all. On the contrary, some of the older postmen would be losers by the new arrangement. If the Postmaster-General was reasonable and logical he would make the stripe system retrospective. He thought it was not unreasonable to ask him to resort to the Tweedmouth system and establish retrospective conditions. If the right hon. gentleman was in sympathy with the auxiliary postmen he had a simple method of improving their lot. He could gradually provide an establishment for them. That was the point he wished to press upon him. He hoped he would not overlook the recommendations of the Commissioners with regard to these men.

*MR. WILES (Islington, S.) said that everybody seemed to have appreciated the tremendous labours which the Hobhouse Committee had undertaken; but he thought he would be able to point out a few more inequalities in their Report. Considering the immense mass of workers and the intricacies and ramifications of the postal departments, this ought not to be very difficult. The hon. Member for Stockport had stated that the maximum of every class had been increased, or rather that nearly every class had been increased.

*MR. WARDLE said he did not say that the maximum of every class had been increased. What he did say was that the conditions in regard to a certain part of their scale had been changed.

*MR. WILES said that at any rate some hon. Members had stated distinctly that the maximum had been increased in nearly every class in the postal service. He desired some further consideration to be given to the postal porters—a class who were almost entirely employed in London and who came under Zone I. He might mention that nearly all the postal porters were old Army or Navy men. They had their minimum increased from 23s. to 25s. and he was pleased to notice that they had now a new avenue opened to them in something like eighty additional Lobby appointments. What he wished to point out was that their maximum had not been touched at all. In the evidence which the postal porters put forward before the Committee, perhaps they made rather a large claim, because they asked to be raised by two annual increments to 40s. per week. Nearly all the other classes had been increased as regards their maximum, many of them during the last twenty-five years, but it was a fact that the postal porters had received no increase in their maximum since the Departmental Committee of 1882. Up to that time their maximum was 27s. per week, and they were then raised to 30s. per week. Since the year 1882 many reasons could be advanced in favour of the claim which they put forward for a further rise in their wages. In the first place rents and rates in London and its suburbs had gone up, and the standard of living and the necessities of Londoners generally were now much greater than they were twenty-six years ago. It should not be overlooked that postal porters were obliged to live near their work. He believed that there were something like 750 of these men employed at Mount Pleasant, 350 were employed at the General Post Office, and the remaining 300 or 400 were scattered about the district offices. Not only had the cost of living and housing increased as affecting these men, but their responsibilities and their duties were much greater than they used to be. It was well known that they now had much more important work to do, and considerable changes in their duties and responsibilities had occurred during the last ten years. Originally their work as porters simply consisted of transferring the mails in bulk, but now they had to perform certain extra duties such as stamping and assisting the sorters, and they often were entrusted with large amounts of money and other valuable posted matter in the vans which were under their charge. He hoped the Postmaster-General would consider the claims of the postal porters, and see if it was not possible to put them in a better position with regard to their maximum pay. There was one other matter he would like to refer to, and that was the "trip allowance," which was dealt with on page 67 of the new circular which had been recently issued. The trip allowance for a postman travelling in a railway mail van for a long distance which necessitated his taking lodgings and sleeping out and taking his meals away from home, was 3s. for the shortest distance. There was another class of servants who travelled in the same van, and that class, for some reason or other, was allowed 4s. Now, it was almost impossible really to classify these men who had to travel in the mail van together, and he hoped the Postmaster-General would see the advisability of giving all the men who travelled together in the same mail van the same amount of trip allowance. He noticed that on page 47 of the Report the Committee had the case of postmen's Christmas boxes before them. He did not think anybody had up to the present mentioned this matter in the debate. Personally, he very much regretted that the Hobhouse Committee, who he expected would have reported unanimously against what he considered was a most objectionable practice, recommended that the system of Christmas boxes should be allowed to go on. He felt that Christmas boxes were not only a tax on the public, but, in his opinion, it was a practice which lowered the dignity of British Civil servants to have their salaries made up by "touting" round at a particular time of the year asking for gratuities. He had hoped that this practice, would have been altered, and he still had confidence that the Postmaster-General during his term of office would be able to deal with this important question, of doing away altogether with what he considered the most objectionable system of Christmas boxes, which were looked upon as part of wages. There was just one other point which he would like to touch upon, and it was the question of civil rights, which came before the Committee, and was dealt with on page 2 of the Report.

*THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must point out to the hon. Member that the question of civil rights as affecting the postal service cannot be discussed under this Supplementary Vote.

*MR. WILES said he had heard several hon. Members mention the question of civil rights, and in one case an hon. Member was called to order, and in the other case he was permitted to make a few remarks about the subject when the Chairman was presiding. He hoped that on the general Vote for the Post Office he would have an opportunity of discussing the question of civil rights. He would conclude his remarks by asking the Postmaster-General to be good enough to consider the matters he had put before him, and he trusted the right hon. Gentleman would see his way during the revision to adjust these inequalities.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said he had had the advantage of listening to the speeches made in the debate by the Postmaster-General, and Members could not express themselves too gratefully for the extreme courtesy with which he had dealt with all the observations which had been made on both sides of the House, as well as for the ability with which he had consistently discharged the duties of his office. Perhaps he might be allowed to express the sense of obligation the country was under to the Committee who had spent so much time and taken so much trouble in connection with the investigation of the very difficult subject with which they were now dealing. His hon. friend the Member for the Hoxton Division, had given an illustration of some of the absurdities which would result from the adoption of this Report, and one of them was this. There were some men working under the Post Office in the Lombard Street Post Office who were receiving a maximum of 62s. a week, whereas other men working under similar conditions, and doing the same work in Threadneedle Street Post Office were receiving a maximum of 3s. a week more, simply because they happened to be working on the Central Office staff. He was aware that this point had been called into question, but he understood that there was not the slightest doubt that anomalies like this had been created by adopting the Report. Equally, there was not the slightest doubt that whatever the Report had been, and whatever the Postmaster-General attempted to do in connection with his arrangements, a number of anomalies would inevitably be left. They could not make any alteration in any one particular case without creating a series of monopolies over the whole service, in regard to which some servants would be justly entitled to complain. Some of them complained because their wages were not increased, and others complained because somebody else had got an increase and they had not, and so this state of things went on. He thought there were two serious points to which strong exception ought to be taken which arose out of the Report and out of what the Postmaster-General proposed to do. In respect to these points, he proposed after the explanation which the Postmaster-General had given to move a reduction of the Vote by £100, because there was no other way of testing the feeling of the Committee. His first point was this. The Select Committee had limited the benefits of the new arrangements to the new comers. His opinion was that the Committee intended that the benefits which they were advising should be conferred upon the existing staff, and he felt quite sure that that was what they had in their mind. They were not dealing with the question of the state of affairs that might arise twenty years hence, or the state of affairs that might be expected to arise in two or three years time. What he understood the Committee was appointed for was distinctly to deal with the existing staff, but what had happened? He thought the public would be very much surprised to hear that the existing staff were to be entirely cut out and passed over, and would have to finish the rest of their service under existing circumstances, and under grievances which they had so long complained of, whilst the new comers who entered the service were to be the happy people who would be benefited by the increases which were suggested in this Vote. He believed it was a fact that no one in the Postal Telegraph Service to-day, over the age of twenty-one years, on the present staff, would be improved in his position. If that was the case, it seemed to him that not only the Committee which had gone into these points and made recommendations upon them, and told them what they considered was the right thing to do, but the whole country would be grossly deceived with regard to this matter. His other point was that, in addition to London, there were fourteen large and important towns in England, including such places as Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, and other large towns, in which the telegraphists were to have no improvement whatever in their rate of pay. This referred not merely to the present telegraphists but also to those who would be employed in the future. He had been listening for some hours to the speeches made by hon. Members, and they all appeared to him to confirm the statement that the intention of the Committee was to give a substantial and decent increase in wages to practically every grade in the service. There was, however, one grade which they had left out altogether, and that was the telegraphists in fourteen large towns in the United Kingdom. What made this anomaly more striking was that while they had ignored the telegraphists in those fourteen large towns, they had increased the maximum wages of the telegraphists at the Central Office, London. He did not suppose that there was throughout the country a single telegraph operator who would complain that the telegraphists in London at the Central Office were going to get 3s. a week more; but the anomaly was leaving the town scale of wages below the level of other places. The pay was 9s. a week lower for telegraphists in the provinces than at the Central Office, London. That difference was not accounted for by the difference in the cost of living, and it certainly was not accounted for by the extra work that a man in London did as compared with similar work done in Manchester. He did not think there was any satisfactory reason for a difference of 9s. a week in the pay of telegraphists in London and Birmingham. He strongly held that the existing staff were quite as much entitled to benefit by the proposals they were discussing as posterity, and he hoped the scale would be revised. On these grounds whilst thanking the Postmaster-General for his courtesy, he begged to move the reduction of this vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £259,900, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Watson Rutherford*).

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh Mid.) said he had no desire to detain the Committee for more than a moment or two, but he wished to draw directly the attention of the Postmaster-General to the case of the city of Armagh in reference to the new scheme of classification which had been adopted there. He understood that in the city of Armagh the Armagh Post Office had been placed in Class 5, which was the lowest rank existing in the United Kingdom. He ventured to think that that was not in accord with the dignity of the city which was, after all, the ecclesiastical metropolis of Ireland. Such a proposal on the part of the Post Office detracted very much from the importance of Armagh as a commercial city. He understood that this revising of the Armagh Post Office and reducing it to the lowest class had an important bearing upon the position and prospects upon the officials employed there.

*Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Is it a sub-office.

*Mr. LONSDALE said with all due respect he ventured to say that it was not a sub-office. The officials employed in the Armagh Post Office would not derive any benefit from the £500,000 which the new scale of remuneration was estimated to cost, and therefore he hoped that the Postmaster-General would take this matter into his consideration. He wished to point out that Armagh was one of the most important provincial offices in Ireland. Besides being engaged in the general postal work of the locality, it was also an Inland Revenue centre for the distribution of Inland Revenue stamps and the performance of work connected with the Court of Probate. He ventured to think that it was a great hardship that the men employed in this important office should be shut out from all participation in the benefits which were being conferred under the new scheme.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said it was impossible for him to keep the names of all Post Offices in his head, but he thought the hon. Member was mistaken in assuming that it was necessarily going to be placed under Class 5.

MR. LONSDALE said he was in a position to state that the officials of the Armagh Post Office were under the impression that the right hon. Gentleman had definitely decided to place them under Class 5.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not think that is so, and I am pretty clear in my mind about it. That office is, I think, in suspense as regards the postmen.

MR. LONSDALE said that if the Armagh Post Office was in suspense it was all the more important that he should deal with the matter, and deal with the great importance of this particular office. As he had already stated it was the ecclesiastical metropolis of Ireland, a very important military centre, and also a most important commercial centre, and surely it would be a very great hardship to inflict upon this important and ancient city the indignity of being placed upon the very lowest rank in connection with the Post Office. He desired to point out that there were men employed in that office who had received no increase of wages for the last ten years. Complaints had been made to him that the staff employed there had been put off from all participation in the advantages offered by this new scheme. He gathered from the circular which had been issued by the Post Office to the Post Office Staff that, to use the Postmaster-General's own words, "He is not at present able to complete his inquiries into the case of the smaller class." He would like the right hon. Gentleman to inform the Committee whether a definite conclusion had been arrived at with regard to the position of the Armagh Post Office, and whether it was going to be the subject of reconsideration. He would be very glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that the matter had not yet been definitely settled.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said he had already stated that that was so as far as he knew.

MR. LONSDALE said that Armagh was an important commercial city of great historical interest, and it was the centre of a very important district which was really entitled to be placed in a higher position than it would occupy if placed under Class 5. This, to him, was a very important question, and he hoped the Postmaster General would favourably consider what he had said.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think I am correct in saying that Armagh is in suspense as regards the postmen. I have no doubt, as the hon. Member has stated, that Armagh is an important town, and I will see that the case is considered. I will look into the matter, and I think I may safely say that nothing as yet has been definitely decided.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to thank the right hon. Gentleman for his promise.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton): said he would like to know definitely what the attitude of the Post Office was in regard to the statement that the benefits were being confined to new comers. Some of them believed that the increases were only prospective, that the present staff were to be penalised because they were on the staff, and that those who were coming on in the future would get all the benefits. Would the Postmaster-General give the Committee a definite statement that those already on the staff were not going to be excluded from the increases in wages If that point were cleared up, a good deal of opposition to the Report of the Committee would be removed. If, on the other hand, it was true that the present staff were to be penalised simply because they were on the staff, it was a gross injustice, and for that reason he would be obliged to support the Motion to reduce the Vote.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said the Postmaster-General undoubtedly possessed a quality which entitled him to respect, that of modesty, but it was a quality which might easily be too conspicuous in the head of a great public department. In this and in other matters he paid too great deference to the decisions of others, instead of exercising his own power and judgment. Doubtless the Committee's Report was a well-digested one, but it was open to question in several respects, and was not above amendment. In these days when we were threatened with great extensions of State service, it was well to keep in mind one marked distinction between State service and private employment. The servant of the State as a rule aimed at a steady and permanent career, with a steady, if slow, improvement in his conditions of service. In private enterprise, on the other hand, employers and employed were in one boat, depending for prosperity on the encouragement of the public outside, through voluntary purchase of their products. Reductions in private enterprises were sometimes necessary, and willingly undertaken by all the workers, to bring back the tide of work and prosperity. The State worker was in a different position, and to submit him to a reduction in pay or status, was likely to take the heart out of him as a worker. For these reasons he thought some of the proposals unfortunate. He also desired to record his opinion that the increases recommended for the central staff should be extended to the great provincial towns, otherwise there would be a difference between them which justice did not warrant.

MR. T. DAVIES (Fulham) called the attention of the Postmaster-General to the position of the factory employees who were engaged on piecework. He did not gather from the Report that the Committee definitely recommended that piecework should be done away with. There were workers of experience in the factory who sometimes did not earn more than eight shillings a week. Of course, they sometimes earned a good deal more, but he thought that no one in the Government service who had to live in London should be paid only eight shillings a week. It would not be allowed in any private service. There ought to be a minimum which pieceworkers should draw every week, whatever it might be. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would look into this particular matter. He desired also to call attention to the question of medical attendance, and to the grievance which was felt by men who lived more than three miles away from the medical officer of the district to which they were attached. The Committee recommended that the medical area should be the area in which the men lived. Medical attendance was not required in the office during the day, because a man would do his best to pull through his work and get home. In the middle of the night, or next day, he might want medical attendance. He might then find that he was six or seven miles away from the medical officer. He asked the right hon. Gentleman to consider this matter with the view to some better arrangement being made.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON appealed to the Committee to allow the discussion on this Vote to close. He would give his careful attention to the matters which had been brought to his notice by hon. Members.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) remarked that the Opposition would be neglecting their duty if they did not criticise the Vote. He pointed out that although the addition asked for to salaries and wages for Post Office establishments in England for the new year was £190,000 and for Scotland £47,000, only £22,000 was put down for Ireland. He had expected the Nationalists to draw attention to this matter, but they had not done so. Whenever there was any wrong to Ireland to be righted they were always absent.

Mr. JOSEPH PEASE rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided: Ayes 200, Noes 47. (Division List No. 18.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen Charles P. (Stroud)
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W.B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir W.J. (S.Pancras, W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, C.H(Sussex, E.Gr'nst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Edwards Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davis, T.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M. (Aberdeen, W.
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Rchard Durning
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford, E.
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richardson. A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Rt.Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson, Sir G Scott(Bradford
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel, Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Thompson, J.W.H(Somerset, E
Tillett, Louis John
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampton
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney
Watt, Henry A.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. J. A. Pease and Mr. Whitley.

NOES.

Barrie, H.T.(Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bethell, SirJ.H(Essex,Romf'rd
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cavendish, Rt.Hn. Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Capt. James (Down, F.).
Cross, Alexander
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalyrmple, Viscount
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness

Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Forster, Henry William
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Jenkins, J.
Jowett, F. W.
Kelley, George D.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee

Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
M'Arthur, Charles
O'Grady, J.
Pease, HerbertPike(Darlington
Rawlinson, JohnFrederickPeel
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Seddon, J.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Wiles, Thomas

Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Tellers for the Noes.—Mr. T. L. Corbett and Mr. Fell.

Question put accordingly, "That a sum, not exceeding £259,900, be granted for the said Service."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 11; Noes, 195. (Division List No. 19.)

AYES.

Cleland, J. W.
Cross, Alexander
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan
Hills, J. W.
Houston, Robert Paterson

Hunt, Rowland
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
M'Arthur, Charles
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool, Walton
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard

Wiles, Thomas

Tellers for the Ayes.—Mr. Watson Rutherford and Mr. Seddon.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Allen, A.Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A.(Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barrie, H. T.(Londonderry, N.)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, SirJ.H(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Branch, James
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt. Hn.SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.

Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J (S.Pancras,W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig, CaptainJames(Down,E.)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (MontgomeryCo.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fullerton, Hugh

Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Guinness, Walter Edward
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Horridge, Thomas Gardiner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire

Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M(Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Montagu, E. S.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Grady, J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Pollard, Dr.
Price,C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford, E.)
Radford,G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts,G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs)
Robertson,Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor John W. (Durham)
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Wason,John Cathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
White,Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J.H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. J. A. Pease and Mr. Whiteley.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS III.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a supplementary sum, not exceeding £5,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for the Expenses of the Royal Irish Constabulary."

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) said he objected to the Vote altogether, because he regarded the charge as entirely unnecessary, especially when a huge Vote had been already granted for the Royal Irish Constabulary. In order to understand the nature of the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary, he would remind the Committee that the police of Ireland cost the taxpayer a million and a half of money, and that cost, as compared with the cost of the police in this country, was grossly excessive. In England the cost of the police was 2s. 4d. per head of the population; in Scotland it was 2s. 2d. per head; and in Ireland, 6s. 8d. per head. Under these circumstances, he thought that if any extra burden was to be thrown upon the police authorities of Ireland, there was provision enough of money and men to meet any emergency without applying for an additional grant from the Exchequer. This charge for extra police was said to be in connection with the disturbed districts in Ireland. He denied that there were any disturbed districts in Ireland, and he lived in and represented one which was so described. A few years ago, he thought it was in 1901, a Select Committee of this House, presided over by the hon. Member for Sheffield, reported that there was no criminal class in Ireland, and yet not only were the huge sums to which he had referred voted year by year for the police, but each year, if anything at all out of the ordinary occurred in the country, the Government applied for an additional Vote. He was particularly interested in this matter, because it involved not merely a charge upon the taxpayers, but also upon the ratepayers in several counties in Ireland. The county council of the county in which his constituency was situated had been asked for a contribution towards these charges of £1,699 for the half-year ended last September. He would draw the attention of the Attorney-General to the law on this matter. These extra police, as he understood, had been imported into certain counties in Ireland under a proclamation, and so far as he knew they could not be so imported without a proclamation. Certain counties were proclaimed early in the month of September under 6 & 7 William IV., and this proclamation so far as he understood did not refer to any date preceding that upon which it was issued; yet the demands in respect of the charges for the extra police had been made against the county council for six months prior to the date of the proclamation. For instance, in county Roscommon, the account began in the month of May and went on in June, July, and August; but during none of those months was the county under proclamation. A demand was made upon the county council quite recently for this huge sum of money, but they postponed the consideration of the matter until legal advice could be obtained upon it. He would ask the Attorney-General to look into this question before the close of the debate, and to justify if he could the charge prior to the date of the proclamation. This was not a matter which referred to one county only; it referred to many; the county of Galway had had a charge of £1,100 made against it, and county Clare one for £900. It was a very serious matter in this year of all others in regard to the western province, because the local authorities had actually had to undertake obligations in respect to the future and to help the people with seed to tide over a period of distress. This charge was in connection with the agrarian movement which was taking place in Ireland. A Royal Commission had been investigating that subject, and Bills had been promised. One was promised for last year, but the promise was not kept. One was promised for this year, and they hoped that the pledge would be kept. The real cause of what were called disturbances would be very quickly wiped away if this House would act according to its own pledges and put into proper operation the law which it passed in the year 1903. Then, the Legislature held out hopes to the people that the land would be properly sold and divided amongst them. That hope had been dissipated, and in consequence these so-called disturbances had taken place, and the ratepayers in the poorest parts of Ireland were called upon to meet this huge levy, while the taxpayers of both Great Britain and Ireland were obliged to support the landowners and graziers of the western province of Ireland. Even supposing that extra police were required in any portion of Ireland, he thought that out of the million and a half which was annually voted, sufficient money could be found to send a few police from one part of a county into another; but instead of that this House was compelled, whenever anything extra was required in the way of duty by the police in Ireland, to pay extra. Moreover, the most expensive method was resorted to of bringing the police from one county to another instead of bringing them from one portion of a county to another part of it. The police were brought from the farthest county in Ireland in order to heap up the charges. He made a statement in his own constituency and he now repeated it, that the reason for importing large forces of constabulary into certain counties in Ireland was to punish the people of those counties for their activity on the land question. It was a reminder to them of those punitive expeditions which they heard of against natives in Eastern countries. He thought also that when police were brought into a district, local opinion on the subject should be taken into consideration, but the only local opinion ever adopted or sought for was that of the local police authorities themselves—[AN HON. MEMBER: And the landlords]—and, as his friend said, of the landlords. It was extraordinary how different places were treated owing to the different temperament of the police officer situated in them. To give an example, last summer he attended a meeting in his constituency, and there he found a force of a hundred police with three or four district inspectors of the county constabulary. The force had absolutely nothing to do. About three weeks later he was attending a meeting about one and a half miles away from that place, but it was in the county of Galway. All the police he found there were one district inspector and three constables, and, it must be remembered, that in this case the meeting was held almost opposite and within less than one hundred yards of the house of a man who certainly was not popular in the district, inasmuch as there was a strong feeling against him for having taken a farm which ought to have been divided up amongst the people. It was said that these meetings were intimidatory. Well, if ever there was a meeting which from that point of view might be called intimidatory it was one of this kind, held almost immediately outside the house of a man whom the people regarded as a land-grabber; and yet with this small force of police the man was not molested, he was not booed, and nothing whatever took place which required the attention of the police. The people when they assembled at these meetings did not desire to violate the law or to defy the police, but they were determined to put forward their views and to carry those views, when they were right and proper, into effect. He attributed the different treatment in those two places situated in one parish though in different counties, to the fact that there were different police officers in the two places, and this set him to examining into the character of the officer who was responsible in each case. He found that in the first case the officer responsible was a county inspector, who filled that position in the years 1901, 1902 and 1903, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover set out upon a slight career of coercion. He found that this county inspector had put the Coercion Act into operation in a manner to disgust even the removeables on the bench, who rarely refused to convict when asked to do so. He brought forward a case against the chairman of the county council of Roscommon, Mr. John Fitzgibbon, the charge being that he was driving along a road on the wrong side. That was the offence for which a special Act of Parliament and a specially packed bench was introduced into Roscommon. So absurd was the case, and so absurd was the evidence brought forward—for Inspector McConnell himself was proved to have gone on the wrong side of the road, and not Mr. Fitzgibbon—that the two removables dismissed the case, and then the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover removed Mr. McConnell to the depot. When the strong hand was wanted to keep down the people who were crying to this House to keep the pledges it had made, the Government found this man and sent him to Roscommon. The result had been that police from all parts had been flooding the place for the last twelve months, and the House was now asked to vote this large sum and the ratepayers of Ireland were called on to bear to a higher degree a burden already too heavy for them. The Government which found it difficult to get money to put into operation the laws of necessity and urgency passed by this House was ready at any moment to ask for huge sums for the upkeep of the police. He asked the Attorney-General to inform the House on what ground these demands had been made on various county councils of Ireland for the payment of extra police prior to the date of the districts being proclaimed, and to say whether the executive or the county inspector of each county was responsible for the amount of police brought into the county; what steps were taken to ascertain the necessity for the extra police; and whether immediately the inspector said they were necessary they were drafted into the district. He would point out that in England the county councils were consulted in matters respecting the police, and that they controlled the police in their own districts. He would like to know whether the county councils of Ireland were consulted and whether their opinion was taken into account in the matter. As representation went with taxation he asserted that the county councils of Ireland ought to have a voice in these matters. They had shown their capacity for local government. He further asked whether anything that took place at public meetings in Ireland justified such large forces of police being present at those meetings. It was said that the police were there to prevent cattle-driving; but cattle-driving took place when the police were asleep or away enjoying themselves. The fact was that when the people of a district assembled in a legitimate manner for a legitimate object the police were drafted in to see if there was any fear of disturbance. But seeing that all the people were agreed as to the object for which they had assembled he failed to see on what ground anybody could believe a breach of the peace was possible. Yet in some cases there were at these meetings as many police as civilians, and the charge for those police was made on the tax-payers of the United Kingdom and Ireland and the ratepayers of the counties of Ireland. He protested against such a thing being allowed. So far as this Vote was concerned they were only at the commencement of the charge. The charge was for the half-year ending 7th September last. Since then four months had passed, during which time the police authorities seemed to have lost their heads and large police forces were stationed in many counties of Ireland. Those acquainted with Ireland agreed that these large forces of police were unnecessary; that in many cases they were a cause of irritation and provoked the people to do the very things they were assembled to prevent. He warned the Government that if this system of terrorism and blackmail were persisted in it would imperil the very existence of local government in Ireland. If these large demands continued to be made people would be prevented from taking part in local government, and the result would be to kill that local government in Ireland which had proved such a success for the last ten years. He hoped that would be avoided by the extra police being withdrawn and the people being allowed to meet to assert their demands so long as those demands were reasonable. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £4,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Hayden.*)

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I rise to support the Motion of my hon. friend. I desire to develop one aspect of the case put forward by him. I wish to point out that so far as these districts are concerned the supposed necessity of these large drafts of police is largely due to the grossly exaggerated accounts that have been given of the agitation and of the so-called disturbances, and by the creation of a state of panic by bogus outrages which are reported in this country and in Ireland. There is at this moment in England a gentleman from Galway, one of the so-called disturbed districts where the extra police are employed, who is delivering lectures endeavouring to create a belief in this country that the portion of the county from which he comes is in a state of outrage, crime, and disturbance. I refer to Mr. H. Persse, of Woodville, in the county of Galway. There are two matters connected with Mr. Persse that ought to stand out very prominently. The first of these is that this is Lord Clanricarde's estate, the cause of untold trouble, disturbance, and anxiety to Governments of various Parties. I will prove conclusively in a moment that there is no real outrage, but at the same time there is no use blinking the fact that so long as the law passed in 1903 proves, as it has proved up to the present, incapable of dealing with the estate of Lord Clanricarde, you will have agitation and disturbance there. The second fact which ought to stand out prominently in connection with the case of Mr. Persse is that, according to his own statement, his troubles commenced during the secretaryship of the right hon. Member for Dover and continued all through the secretaryship of the right hon. Member for S. Dublin. Therefore, if his statement as to disturbance and boycotting in that part of Galway is true, it is absurd to seek to throw the blame on the present Chief Secretary. In trying to bring this country to the conviction that this expenditure is necessary, Mr. Persse has posed as a simple innocent farmer, anxious to carry out his avocation and prevented from doing so by the machinations of the United Irish League and the intimidation of the people. What is this gentleman's record? He served for some years in the Mounted Police in India. Why did he leave India, I wonder? It would be interesting if we could follow his career and arrive at the conclusion why he gave up the avocation of a policeman in India. After that he went to South Africa and became a mounted policeman there. Why did he sever his connection with the police in South Africa? Finally he found his way to Lord Clanricarde's estate, and now poses as an ordinary farmer who is prevented from following his avocation by the action of the people. When he went to Lord Clanricarde's estate he found a large grazing farm, named Woodville, let on the eleven months system to grazers for a very large number of years. If I am rightly informed three grazers who had this large farm in order to facilitate the carrying out of the policy of the late Tory Government and of this House in the Act of 1903, gave up their holdings so that these grass lands might be dealt with and divided up amongst the people in the settlement of the Clanricarde dispute. Then this ex-policeman stepped in and took a letting. It would be ridiculous to pretend that a man of that kind could be taken on the Clanricarde estate especially, without arousing the bitterest feelings of hostility. That is the way in which Mr. Persse came into possession of the farm. Trouble began immediately while the right hon. Member for Dover was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and he applied to Dublin Castle for police protection. He was refused, not by the present Government, but by the late Tory Government. Why was he refused? I ask the Attorney-General for Ireland to produce the documents connected with that application. I ask him to tell the House frankly what local reports were sent to Dublin Castle on the matter, and what were the reasons—because he has the records—why police protection was refused. This gentleman has written to-day a letter to the newspapers in which he denies that he went to Dublin Castle for police protection until after the alleged moonlighting attack. Here is what he says to-day—

> "To the best of my belief I was under police protection in March, 1905, and it is not improbable that after the assault on my house I did apply to the authorities in Dublin. The result of that application was not to increase the protection for which I asked. I cannot charge my memory with the official reply, whether it was a direct refusal or was to the effect that my case would receive consideration. The net result however was that no additional police protection was given."

His complaint is that the protection he asked was refused. Here is what the *Irish Times* wrote in an interview with this gentleman at the time—

> "Mr. Persse went to the police authorities and demanded protection, but met, he says, with scant courtesy. He went to Dublin Castle, where he saw some of the higher officials"—

I wonder if he saw the Member for South Dublin—

> "who in reply to his request promised to send down some police huts and charge the disturbed area with the cost. This promise, however, was broken. The huts were not sent, but Mr. Persse was allowed to provide for his own protection, and now he is at great inconvenience obliged to accommodate three policemen on his own premises. He is still boycotted, and for his personal protection has to carry a revolver."

Mr. John Redmond.

Therefore, it is clear that Mr. Persse, when he first went to Dublin Castle for additional police protection, was refused by the late Government. I should like to know whether this gentleman or the correspondent of the *Irish Times*, who professes to quote him, is telling the truth. Is it true that he went to Dublin Castle before this alleged outrage, and that he was refused, or is it true that he never went to Dublin Castle for protection until after the attack was made upon his house? A few days after this transaction—after he was told that if he wanted policemen he would have to put them up in his own house and pay for them—the whole of this country was startled by a most sensational announcement of a daring moonlighting attack upon this gentleman's house. It appeared in the daily papers in this country under sensational headlines: "Terror in Ireland," "Dastardly Moonlighting Attack upon an Unoffending Farmer," "Shots fired," "Brave Conduct of an English Lady." We were horrified about this matter, and we asked some questions of the Government, but we were unable at first to get any information from them. They said they were making inquiries. Let me read an account of the outrage which appeared in that leading Tory newspaper, the *Irish Times.* The *Irish Times* said—

> "At about eight o'clock on Thursday night an attack was made on the residence of Mr. H. Persse at Woodville, county Galway, by a party of moonlighters. The windows of the front of the house were smashed in with stones, while a number of revolver shots were at the same time discharged. Although a great deal of alarm was caused to Mr. Persse and his family very little damage was done apart from the smashing of the windows. A lady in the house, however, had a very narrow escape. When the shots where fired Mr. Persse seized a revolver, pursued the attacking party, and returned their fire, discharging four shots. The moonlighters returned the fire, but Mr. Persse escaped injury. The affair coming, as it does, so soon after the Athenry and other outrages has left a very uneasy feeling among persons who have become obnoxious to the United Irish League in the district. The police are

actively engaged in pursuing inquiries, but up to the time of wiring no arrests have been made."

Let me say at once that every syllable of that letter from beginning to end has been proved to be untrue. Mr. Persse, having been charged with creating this bogus outrage, in his letter denies now in a half-hearted way the accusation against him, and he says that he never stated that shots were fired at his house. This was his wire—"Woodville House was attacked last night. I pursued and fired several shots." He says he was in no degree responsible for the account given in the *Irish Times* of the attack on his house in March, 1905, but from that date until his letter this morning he never denied the statement which appeared in the *Irish Times* that shots were fired at his house. We questioned the Government over and over again upon this matter, and we could get no reply from them except that they were making inquiries. Now, let me read the real account of this transaction. There is the report made by the Special Commissioner of the *Freeman's Journal*, sent down by that newspaper to investigate the occurrence on the spot, and whose account was never challenged, either by the *Irish Times* or the representative of the Tory Government of the day, or by anyone else, from that day to this. Writing from Loughrea on 4th March, 1905, he says:—

"I made careful inquiries in reference to this report, and I was informed by the police authorities that no shot was fired, either at or into Mr. Persse's house by anybody."

This is admitted by Mr. Persse to-day for the first time. The *Freeman's Journal* Commissioner goes on to say—

"I made further inquiries to-day in reference to the phantom shooting by phantom moonlighters into the house of Mr. H. Persse on Thursday night. On Thursday evening I learn Mr. Persse was upstairs in his house dressing for dinner. He heard a crash like the breaking of glass, and rushed down asking what it was. In the hall he met an English lady, who handed him a double-barrelled gun which was in the hall. He seized it, opened the hall door, and shouted, 'Police!' The police were quartered in an outhouse adjacent to Mr. Persse's residence, and they were instantly on the scene. The police searched every inch of the place, but no trace of a moonlighter was to be seen. The only human being they discovered was a man named Mike Mannion, who is a kind of general factotum for Mr. Persse. Mike said he was looking after the rabbit traps, but he saw no moonlighters."

This is the whole story of the diabolical moonlight outrage. I challenge the Attorney-General, as the representative of the Irish Government in this House to-night, to deny that this is the absolutely true account of what took place. As I have already pointed out, we have a dramatic confirmation to-day from Mr. Persse himself that there were no moonlighters, and that no shots were fired. Now this is the gentleman who is here to-day rehearsing in English drawing-rooms what is alleged to be going on in Ireland, and inducing people to believe that the country is in a state of disturbance necessitating the expenditure of thousands upon thousands of pounds upon the police. That lie about the outrage on Mr. Persse at Woodville, which was spread at the time was published all over the world. I read it in big type in American papers, I read it in Australian papers, I read it in French papers, and the contradiction which I have given now has never reached the public through these papers, and that bogus moonlighting outrage at Mr. Persse's house has passed into the kind of history that is made up upon this agrarian question in this country. It is monstrous that a gentleman with a record such as this should ask anybody in England to take his word when he comes to tell them of alleged outrages in any part of Ireland. If he lied with reference to this transaction, who can take his word in reference to any story he tells in London drawing-rooms. I dwell upon this incident in order to emphasise the point made by my hon. friend the Member for South Roscommon that these extra police are requisitioned largely owing to the panic created by the dissemination of lying stories in this country. I have more than once said in this House that there is a section of the Press and a section of certain politicians in this country who, quite regardless of the highest interests of this country in connection with Ireland, are sedulously devoting themselves to the object of trying to create the belief in Great Britain that Ireland is in a state of crime and outrage. I have exposed one of these stories. It is typical of many others. I have only taken this particular instance because it is the case of this gentleman who has come over here to pose as a poor persecuted farmer, and to ask the people of this country to take his word with reference to the state of Ireland. I warn the people of this country not to trust the word of a man whose record is such as I have shown in connection with this case, and I beg the Government not to persist in throwing into these districts large bodies of police on the information of persons of this kind, but to investigate every case of alleged outrage and to enter into the consideration of it with suspicion in their minds, because it has been too often the habit of English Governments to take for granted every story of crime and outrage that comes to them. I beg the Government when a story comes to them to view it with suspicion, and not to act upon it until they have assured themselves by the clearest possible evidence that there is at any rate some ray of truth in it. I sincerely trust that the House will make a protest against what is going on in Ireland, by voting with my hon friend.

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said they all appreciated the eloquence and skill with which the hon. Member for Waterford had tried to draw a red herring across the path. They were asked to conclude from what the hon. and learned Gentleman had said about one case, and from the element of doubt which he had suggested, that the case was typical of many others of which the House had made painful acquaintance in recent weeks. Instead of dwelling on the picture which the hon. and learned Gentleman had drawn, he preferred to refer briefly to the statements made by the hon. Member for South Roscommon, and to the arguments which he adduced in favour of the rejection of this most important Vote. The hon. Member's argument was—[A NATIONALIST MEMBER: Persse]. He did not think it necessary to take notice of that interruption. The hon. Member for South Roscommon had assured the House that this was an unnecessary Vote. He admired the courage of the hon. Member who could stand up and make that statement. The hon. Member had reminded them that the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary was £1,500,000 per annum, and he had contrasted the cost of the police in Great Britain and Ireland. In England it was 2s. 8d. per head of the population, in Scotland 2s. 2d., and in Ireland 6s. 8d. He could not help reflecting why the cost of this force was so great in Ireland; and he was bound to say as a Member of this House who had the honour to represent a peaceful and orderly constituency, that in the speeches, of which they had had a fair sample in that delivered by the hon. Member for Roscommon, they discovered an explanation of the great increase in the cost of the Royal Irish Constabulary. [Ironical cheers from the IRISH Benches.] He deliberately stated that by the speeches of different Members of the House, the discontent and crime and outrage prevailing in Ireland had been largely stimulated; and it was because of those unfortunate speeches, alas! only too typical of those to which they had been accustomed for so many years, that this Government were in the unfortunate position of coming to the House and asking for a Vote, substantial, though comparatively small, of £5,000 to cover the extra cost of making what he must consider the very feeble attempts of the Government to maintain law and order in Ireland. They were told by the hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Vote that he had been considerably mystified by the fact that the Government had only proclaimed some counties in September last, and yet they had had the audacity to charge the cost of extra police on those counties as far back as July. He believed the hon. Gentleman was a member of a county council.

MR. HAYDEN: No.

*MR. BARRIE said he regretted the hon. Member was not; but many Nationalist Members enjoyed that privilege in common with himself. He was sure that if the hon. Gentleman had been he would have known that the Government did not require to proclaim any county in Ireland in order to recover the cost of the special force of police necessary for the preservation of law and order in that country. They had been told that the county of Galway had been charged £1,100, and county Clare £900 for extra police. He admitted that these were large sums, and with one or two others they covered the larger proportion of the extra cost which had been thrown on the country because of the unfortunate state of certain parts of it. They had also been told by some Members that they had encouraged the efforts of the people to obtain the fulfilment of the promises which they had received from the British Government; and again, they had again repeated the pitiable spectacle of Members asserting that it was only by agrarian outrages in Ireland that certain legislation could be obtained. He desired to point out that any such assertions were only bound to intensify the evil about which he and his friends complained. Let him say now what he had never before said in that House, that he thought the time had come when they were fairly entitled to ask the Government why it was that with so many recorded crimes in Ireland the proportion of arrests were so small? He was in the City of Dublin a fortnight ago, and there met a sergeant of the Royal Irish Constabulary formerly stationed in the North of Ireland. He took the liberty of saying to him that they in the North were disappointed that the proportion of arrests in regard to crimes committed was so small, and he asked him whether there was any explanation for it. He would not soon forget the answer that he got. It was that, since the present Government came into power. there had been, the officer said, a feeling throughout the constabulary, to put it exactly in the words that were used to him, "That the less we do and the less we see we will be the better thanked." He believed there was a great element of truth in that statement, and he was glad if the law officers of the Crown in Ireland were beginning to see for themselves that this discouraging idea prevailed amongst those charged with the maintenance of law and order in Ireland, because it gave them an opportunity of making it plain there that night what they had never yet done, that they were prepared to stand behind the Constabulary in Ireland when they tried to do their duty.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Was the sergeant who informed you Sergeant Sheridan?

*MR. BARRIE said he wondered what their hon. friend below the gangway would do if it were not for these repeated references to Sergeant Sheridan. The figures they were asked to vote that night were sufficiently ominous, although covering only £5,000 for sustenance and travelling expenses of extra police. The Chief Secretary in reply to a question the other day, said that during the last six months over 800 constables had been enrolled in Ireland. They would deal with that figure when the Estimates came on, but on the present occasion they could deal only with the special items before them. He thought he was correct in saying that the sustenance allowance per night for a constable was only one shilling and sixpence, and it was a very easy calculation for the House to make in order to see how many days duty had been performed by the number of police who were now engaged. They had heard that evening that the sustenance allowance received by certain Post Office officials was three shillings a night, so that the one and sixpence could not be considered excessive. He repudiated the idea that there was any desire on the part of the authorities to shift police from one end of the country to another, when police might have been found in neighbouring counties. The total sum they were asked to vote then spoke far more eloquently than any tongue could of the state of the country, and they were glad that the Government had come forward at this stage, earlier in the session than usual, to tell the Committee that they were determined to see that adequate provision was made for special constables where necessary in the disaffected parts of the country. Speaking from those benches he desired to say nothing that could be further from their wishes than to exaggerate the present state of Ireland. He claimed to have a fair knowledge of Ireland, and he said that nothing that had been stated in that House by any of his colleagues had in the slightest degree exaggerated the unrest, the disaffection, and the pain and injury that had been inflicted on many loyal, quiet, and peaceable citizens in many parts of that unhappy country. He did not hope that they would immediately see a great reform in that matter, but he did think that now that public opinion had been attracted to the matter the Press of Great Britain would not be intimidated in any course they chose to take by anything that was said from time to time from the benches below the Gangway. This much he did say and with it he would conclude, that no man would rejoice more fully and amply than he would, if the time had come when their friends below the Gangway realised that the Government was no longer to be intimidated and that they were now prepared, even somewhat late in the day, to maintain law and order, which was the first and primary duty even of a great Radical Government.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.) said that as an English taxpayer and as a representative of English taxpayers, he rose for the purpose of protesting against being asked to contribute towards the expenses of the Royal Irish Constrabulary, considering the principal occupation in which they were engaged. He had often asked himself the question, what was the reason why in this country, in at least forty constituences, the deciding factor was an alien vote, namely, the Irish vote. He was quite convinced that the Irish in our large towns and cities were not in this country because they loved England more than they loved their own country. The chief instrument that was used for the driving of Irishmen beyond the sea and into this country was the Royal Irish Constabulary. He would not have risen but for the fact that some four or five years ago he, with one of the members of the present Cabinet, visited southwest Ireland, and the scenes they witnessed, especially with regard to the Royal Irish Constabulary, he would never forget. Wherever they went, at whatever station they stopped, they found at least two of the Royal Irish Constabulary. When they arrived at a little place which was then supposed to be a centre of disturbance, wherever they went they were closely followed. After attending a meeting which was held on a Good Friday at the market place they set out to look at the poor people on one of the estates hard by, and no less than fourteen of the Royal Irish Constabulary followed them on bicycles and jaunting cars. But the thing which cut deepest into his soul was when they went out to the hills about eight miles away, and he was shown a hovel, with an earth floor, in which a man and his wife were living who had been evicted from a farm hard by, the rental value of which was £35, whilst four of the Royal Irish Constabulary who were protecting the land-grabber had a beautiful police hut and were guarding that property at a cost of £400 a year to the country. For these reasons he hoped the hon. Member opposite would go to a division. If he did he would support him.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said they had recently heard from Members above the Gangway extraordinary statements with regard to the necessity for putting coercion in force in Ireland. But in 1902, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover was Chief Secretary, there was discontent over the land question. A Bill was introduced that year which was not acceptable to the Irish Party. It was withdrawn. Discontent raged and coercion was in full swing. Several of his colleagues were imprisoned. In the autumn of that year they were promised a comprehensive Land Act and immediately the discontent disappeared, the Coercion Act was withdrawn, and the prison doors were opened. When the general council of county councils protested against an excessive charge being placed upon them the Chief Secretary withdrew the charge. That was greatly at variance with the auguments now used by Gentlemen above the Gangway who said that the only way to govern and control Ireland was by coercion. If the late Government had withdrawn the charges against the county councils it was monstrous that the present Government should try to enforce them, especially where the county councils had no voice in the matter. The elected representatives of the people who managed their affairs in a most creditable manner were simply asked to pay these demands without any consultation as to the needs of the district. They knew exactly what the position of affairs was, and they were the parties who were competent to say whether extra police were necessary or not. It was not they but the local policeman or resident magistrate who was consulted, and they knew very well that crime and outrage in Ireland was butter to the bread of the removable magistrates, and of the police who magnified cases in order to try to get promotion. It was an extraordinary fact also that in the Land Act of 1903 they had provision made for the buying up of grass lands and for their distribution among the people. They had also in the Evicted

Tenants Act increased powers given to the Estates Commissioners, and the real secret of any trouble there was in Ireland was attributable to the weakness of the Government in enforcing the existing law. Let them contrast the misery of people who had to pay exorbitant rents without any help or assistance whatever with the happiness and contentment and industry of the tenants on estates that had adopted purchase. He well remembered the right hon. Member for Dover distinctly stating that any body of tenants in Ireland who fought against the law would be put on the bottom of the list and would not be recognised by the Estates Commissioners. What was the value of such a statement as that coming from gentlemen like the right hon. Member for Dover? Immediately the Act was in force one of the very first properties bought by the Estates Commissioners was the de Freyne and the adjoining estates. Whatever this trouble might be it was attributable simply to the fact that the Act of 1903 and the Evicted Tenants Act of last year were being interfered with and hampered by an outburst here and there. An outrage was supposed to have been committed in Tipperary, a bomb being placed on the lawn in front of a house. It exploded, but was pointed in the opposite direction from the house and did no harm to anybody. This happened while there were three policemen in the house with a poor, delicate, lonely widow, who weighed only about twenty-four stone, and who was the most masculine female in their part of the world. Could anyone in his senses believe that anybody in the locality would for a moment run the risk of planting and exploding a bomb in front of that house? He had suggested to the lady's solicitor that the way to settle the matter would be to sell her property to the Estates Commissioners. The solicitor took steps at once, and the negotiations were entered into in a most friendly manner, and were on the point of being arranged when the explosion took place. Was there any reason to believe for a moment that it was the work of any friend of the tenants? It was the work of an enemy, and instead of getting extra police to put down the United Irish League, what they wanted was to remove the causes of trouble and discontent. He hoped that when the amending Bill was introduced its provisions would not permit of the smooth working of the Land Act and the Evicted Tenants Act being hampered and interfered with.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG (Down, E.) said he never met Mr. Persse, and in fact had never heard of him until a few days ago. With his customary fairness he had expected that the hon. and learned Member for Waterford in quoting a letter from *The Times* of that morning would have at least read the concluding paragraph. What had been referred to occurred in 1905. In the concluding paragraph of his letter Mr. Persse said—

> "It has not been, and cannot be contradicted . . . that at Woodville, county Galway, I am protected by sometimes four and sometimes five policemen day and night. I am boycotted to the extent that I cannot get the necessities of life, nor labour for my fields, nor my horses shod."

It was very unfair of the hon. and learned Member to stop reading the letter where he did. No member of this Committee could suggest for a moment it was untrue that this man was still being persecuted, boycotted, and treated in a manner which in this country was practically unknown. ["No, no."] It had been shown that the state of affairs in Ireland was not satisfactory. The Chief Secretary stated when he came into office that Ireland was more peaceful and satisfactory than it had been for the last 600 years. ["Oh, oh!"]

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Order for Cicero.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG, continuing, said that notwithstanding that statement by the Chief Secretary the Committee was now being asked for an increased grant of £5,000 for assisting the constabulary. How was it that they were being asked to spend £30,000 more on the constabulary in Ireland for maintaining law and order under the present Chief Secretary than under the last Administration? This money was all frittered away upon an administration in Ireland which kept them not under the law of the land, but under the law of the United Irish League. Throughout this debate there had been a tendency to cast a slur upon the good name of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Whatever might be the Government in power or the tactics of the Home Rule Party, whatever the Irish Unionists might say or do, it had always been the pride and glory of Ireland that the Constabulary were able and willing to carry out their duties. They might be wrong sometimes. [NATIONALIST Cries of "No, never."] They might make mistakes like other people, but they had always felt that if the law was in the hands of strong men in Ireland, backed up by the best force of Constabulary in the world, Ireland would be peaceful and quiet. The Unionists had been blamed for using expressions which had caused all this disorder in Ireland. What expressions had fallen from the right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench and from those who represented the present Administration in the Upper House? He maintained that it was those expressions which had created so much chaos and disorder in Ireland. Speeches had been made by members of the Government both in Parliament and outside, in which they had declared that cattle-driving was not considered by the Government a very serious matter. He and his friends maintained that such language excited the cupidity of a certain class in Ireland —cupidity of a socialistic nature, which if carried to its logical conclusion would permit people in London who desired to obtain some of the large jewellers' shops or some of the wealthy drapers' establishments to tamper with those premises, to scatter the goods about, and to look to the responsible Minister to rise in the House and say that after all it was only a haggle of the market. The hon. Member who moved the reduction of the Vote could not understand the necessity for police being present at some meetings, seeing that all the people in the neighbourhood to which he was referring were agreed. Were the poor herdsmen who were guarding the cattle and the farmers who occupied the land included among the people who were agreed? The meetings were often for the purpose of intimidating those very people, and impressing upon them the terrors of the United Irish League. It would be disastrous for Ireland if any responsible Minister countenanced the suggestion that such action would hasten legislation. The first essential to the introduction of any Act dealing with land or any other property in Ireland must be the sternest determination of the Government to maintain law and order. The unfortunate fact of the present movement was that it was directed not so much against landlords as against those who could less easily protect themselves—against farmers, herdsmen, and all classes of shopkeepers who were not so well able as landlords to leave the country. If these proceedings were allowed to continue he was afraid that in time Ireland would see an even greater decrease of population than had been the case recently. There was only one remedy, and that was for the law to be enforced against all, irrespective of persons. It was not his intention to vote against the Government on this Vote. His objection to the voting of an additional £5,000 was the fact admitting that the Government which found the country so peaceful when they came into office were now compelled to admit that their Administration had been a failure, and that Ireland was not so peaceful as it ought to be.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he wished to say a few words in support of his hon. friend's Amendment. He thought hon. Members would join in feeling astonishment that no attempt had been made by hon. Members above the gangway to reply to the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford. Two Unionist Members from Ireland had addressed the Committee since that speech was made. He had never heard a more damning charge made against one of the missionaries of Unionism from Ireland. He fully expected hon. Members above the gangway to rise and vindicate the character of Mr. Persse.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG: I only heard of him a few days ago.

MR. DILLON said he directed the attention of Members of the House, and he wished he could direct the attention of the public of this country, to the fact that when these lying charges, which were made in the drawing-rooms of London where there was no one to contradict them, were challenged on the floor of this House, the late Chief Secretary for Ireland, sat silent, and a Unionist Member from Ireland declared he knew nothing about Mr. Persse.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG: All I said was that personally I never heard of him until a few days ago, and I knew nothing whatever about him.

MR. DILLON: The hon. Member for East Down was not the only Unionist Member who stood up and spoke. The learned and hon. Member for Londonderry, North, spoke before him.

MR. BARRIE: May I also say I have no personal knowledge of Mr. Persse. At the same time, I do not think the charge made here to-night against that gentleman should be made in a place where he cannot make reply.

AN IRISH MEMBER: Who could reply in a duchess's drawing-room?

MR. DILLON: Who commenced this campaign?

MR. BARRIE: You did.

MR. DILLON: What about the duchess's drawing-room? Is it no crime to tell lies against a nation and to blackguard a whole people?

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) Every word is true. [NATIONALIST and MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh."]

MR. DILLON: Every word is false, and I say it has been proved on the floor of the House by the hon. Member for Waterford to be false.

MR. BARRIE: I am exceedingly sorry to interrupt, and you will bear me out, Sir, when I say I am not accustomed to do so, but I challenge the hon. Member who makes these charges to make them where he can be held responsible.

MR. HAYDEN: This is not a duchess's drawing-room.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Send him an invitation to the duchess's drawing-room.

MR. DILLON said he was sorry to say he was not favoured with invitations to the Duchess of St. Albans', and therefore, he was not likely to have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Persse. But let him recall to the minds of members of the Committee the main points in the story told by the hon. Member for Waterford, which had been left unchallenged. He remembered one sentence—a most significant one—which fell from the hon. Member for East Down. He said that he did not know Mr. Persse, but his was the strongest case they could bring forward to show the chaotic and lawless condition of Ireland, and the hon. Member turned round to those benches and asked was there anyone would deny that Mr. Persse was boycotted in the year of grace 1908. But the significant fact was that he was boycotted in January, 1905, when the right hon. Member for Dover, and later when the right hon. Member for South Dublin, was Chief Secretary. Mr. Persse was boycotted throughout the whole of the period of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman, which had been held up over and over again as the period when the law was maintained unquestioned. What was the statement made by the correspondent of the *Irish Times*, which Mr. Persse had left uncontradicted? That in the first week in March, 1905, he (Mr. Persse), having been boycotted in January, went up to the Castle of Dublin, that he interviewed a high official, that the high official promised to send him down police huts and policemen, and charge them upon the district as extra police; that that promise was broken, and that for some reason not known to him, the Government sent him word that they would not send down the police, but that if he wanted police he would have to pay for them himself. Was that true, or was it false? Mr. Persse might have complained, and if it were true that he did complain, and that the police were refused, he would like to know the grounds given to the high official at Dublin Castle by the local police, and who the high official in Dublin was. But that was not all. Mr. Persse got his three police, and he asked Members of the Liberal Party sitting opposite to picture to themselves what would be said from the Unionist Benches if a boycotted man came forward with this story and charged the Chief Secretary of a Liberal Government with having refused him police protection, and declared he was told he would have to pay for the police himself if he wanted them. Of course what was perfectly legitimate in the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin, who was a true-blooded Tory, and above suspicion, would be high treason in a Liberal Chief Secretary. No such charge was made against the present Chief Secretary. On the contrary, Mr. Persse said he was now protected by about ten police. Mr. Persse went on, in the statement he made to the correspondent of the *Irish Times*, to say that he was refused by the Government of the day police protection except at his own charge. He got them, and he stationed three policemen in his outhouse, and then there arose this extraordinary attack upon his house, which went the rounds of all the newspapers in the world. It was published in every newspaper in this country, but the Irish Members were unable to get any contradiction of it published. He must direct attention to the way the Irish Members were treated. Question after question was put to the then Attorney-General, and on March 15th, 1905, the Member for South Tyrone asked the Attorney-General if he would say whether there was any official report of the alleged outrage on Woodville House. Mr. Atkinson, who was then Attorney-General, replied that the occurrence consisted in this: that the fanlight over the door was broken, it was believed, by a blow from a stone. The matter, he said—

> "is receiving, and will continue to receive the close attention of the police, but for the reasons given on Thursday I must decline to disclose the contents of other Reports."

Mr. Dillon.

He (Mr. Dillon) put a subsequent Question, and he got exactly the same reply. On May 31st, 1905, on a Motion to repeal the Coercion Act, he challenged the Government to say whether the whole of this occurrence from beginning to end was not an invention, and later on he said—

> "That the whole story from beginning to end was a deliberate invention, invented by Ashtown and his gang of liars organised for the purpose of blackening the reputation of Ireland."

Still the Government of the day maintained an obstinate silence. Now it was manifest—and he did not believe it was intended to be contradicted—that the whole thing was a bogus outrage, that there were no moonlighters, that no shots were exchanged, although Mr. Persse said in his telegram he went out to the door, exchanged shots, and pursued the moonlighters. The whole thing now had been proved to be an invention. It was now admitted that the whole thing was bogus, and he believed that by it Mr. Persse achieved his object and got rid of the necessity of paying for the police. Yet London was ringing with the sufferings of Mr. Persse, and there was not a dinner-table at which the subject was not mentioned. After what they had heard from the Unionist Members that evening, and after their failure to defend their action, he thought they were entitled to ask the Government to let the light of day in upon this matter and let them know what were the confidential police reports in connection with these bogus outrages. No doubt Mr. Persse was boycotted because he joined Lord Clanricarde in his war upon his tenants. They could not, however, shut their eyes to the situation, inasmuch as it was fifteen years ago that Lord St. Aldwyn announced in this House that he had put pressure within the law on Lord Clanricarde to try and alleviate his tyranny, that Lord Clanricarde was still the puzzle of the Government of the country, and the centre of disturbance, and a man who joined him was likely to be boycotted. Was such a man as this worthy of credence in his description of alleged outrages? After listening to the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford, he said that any Unionist Member ought to be ashamed to have anything to do with the case of Mr. Persse, or in future to refer to the matter.

*THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): My first duty to-night is to deplore the absence of the Chief Secretary, who would if present have replied upon this Vote. It is impossible for my right hon. friend to be here to-night, but I hope we shall have him in his place on Monday. As to the Vote, it is with the very greatest regret that we are compelled to ask for this sum, which although trifling, still is an extra sum of £5,000 for the police. I think hon. Members will agree with me that if the Government were as neglectful of their duties and as indifferent to the maintenance of law and order in Ireland as they are told they are by hon. Gentlemen opposite, they would not have come to the House for this extra money. It was because we were deeply anxious last summer to preserve peace and order in Ireland, and to give every individual, no matter what his politics or business, the full protection of the law, that we felt constrained to proclaim six counties as being in a state of disturbance, and requiring the presence of extra police. Those six counties are Clare, Galway, King's County, Leitrim, Longford, and Roscommon, and they are the only counties in Ireland in which there is any trouble at present. It is said in the newspapers that Ireland is in a state of anxiety, but there are only six counties out of thirty-two in which there is the least trouble and difficulty, and even in those six the trouble is not at all so great as is said from the benches opposite. We have limited the number of extra police as much as possible, and the greatest care will be taken that no unnecessary force is employed in any county. The largest number we have had sent into any county is into Galway, where we have 145 extra police at the present moment. The next largest number was in Roscommon, where there were 133 police who were brought in shortly after the proclamation, and that number is now reduced to ninety-five. The total number of extra police employed in all Ireland, both under the proclamation and under the other power, which the Lord-Lieutenant possesses, was 408. They are required chiefly because of the reprehensible practice of cattle-driving, and that is really almost the sole explanation of the necessity for the extra police, and the fact that we are asking for them is no indication whatever that in other respects there is more crime and outrage in Ireland than in years past. The hon. Member for South Roscommon denies that there are any disturbed districts at all, but I cannot agree with that. He also complained that Roscommon had been charged with a moiety of the expense of the extra police sent, not only under the proclamation, but under the other powers of the Lord-Lieutenant. That matter has been carefully looked into by the law officers, and they are quite satisfied that there is power, and even the obligation, under the Acts to charge a half of the expense of police upon the county to which they are sent, either under the proclamation or under the general powers of the Lord-Lieutenant. As to the complaint that too many police have been sent in some cases, that is a matter which must be left to the judgment of the officers on the spot. It is difficult sometimes for the officers to form a correct judgment beforehand, and unfortunately sometimes the force sent is too large and sometimes too small. In the two cases mentioned by the hon. Member, the two officers formed a different judgment, and while one sent a small force the other sent a large one. It must be left to the discretion of the police officer to say how many will be required.

MR. HAYDEN asked if the Attorney-General could mention a case in which the number was too small?

*MR. CHERRY: There have been disturbances in some instances which would have been prevented if there had been a larger force of police available. The riot at Hill Street was a case in point. I can assure the hon. Member that the Government do everything they can, with safety, to reduce the number of the police. We do not want, however, to render ourselves liable to the charge of neglecting our duty. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford has alluded to the case of Mr. Persse, and has asked me to produce the police reports and to say whether it is true that he was refused police protection. I am unable to do so at the moment. The matter took place before I became Attorney-General; but if the hon Member will put down a Question on the Paper for Monday next, then I hope the Chief Secretary will be able to give the hon. Member satisfactory information in reply. I am surprised that the right hon. Member for South Dublin, who was Chief Secretary during a great portion of that time, has sat there the whole of the evening and has not attempted to make any explanation or statement.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): Wait.

*MR. CHERRY: I think the explanation might have been given immediately after the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford. However, the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, knows what is the proper course to pursue. I cannot control his actions in any way, but I certainly would like to hear from him whether the statement by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford represents the facts. The hon. Member for North Londonderry has made a serious charge against the police to the effect that they were guilty of deliberately refraining from doing their duty, and he has stated that a sergeant had told him that the less the police do and see the better.

MR. BARRIE said he suggested that in the north of Ireland they were disappointed at the small number of arrests compared with the recorded number of serious crimes, and the sergeant answered that undoubtedly since this Government came into power there was a feeling throughout the force that the Government were not behind them in showing the same amount of energy as their predecessors.

*MR. CHERRY: I think that is a very gross charge to make against the Government, and to my certain knowledge it is absolutely untrue. I am constantly in communication with the police, and I know that they are discharging their duty to the best of their ability. I have the highest opinion of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and I could not give a single instance where the police have done anything for which they could be fairly or justly blamed, and it is very unreasonable and unjust to make charges of that kind against the police.

MR. BARRIE: Our charges are against you.

*MR. CHERRY: Of course the hon. Member can make any charge he likes against me, but if he says that I have not been doing my duty in this respect he is saying something which is absolutely contrary to the fact. In no single instance which has come to my knowledge have I done anything to prevent a prosecution.

MR. BARRIE: Perhaps I may be allowed to recall the Attorney-General's decision in the case of Larkin.

*MR. CHERRY: In a case where a jury has disagreed it is unusual to prosecute a second time, but I have violated that rule in prosecution more than once. Larkin was prosecuted for assault in connection with the strike in Belfast. There were two persons charged and the jury acquitted one and disagreed in the other case. As the strike was over and the city peaceful I thought the ends of justice would be perfectly satisfied without any further prosecutions. [A NATIONALIST MEMBER: "The Empire remains unshaken."] It is really our sincere hope to be able to reduce the number of extra police who are dispensed with as far as we possibly can.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I share entirely the regret of the Attorney-General at the absence of the Chief Secretary, and the cause of his absence, and I hope that he may soon be back again. I regret his absence because I believe that had he been present the defence he would have made of the action and policy of the Government would have been much more complete and much more vigorous than that which has been attempted by the Attorney-General. I really think the Attorney-General might have made out a stronger case. He wound up his speech by stating that the police were sent to the railway stations, a custom which he believes to be peculiar to Ireland, because they had nothing better to do. To my certain knowledge it is part of the duty of the police of this country to be in attendance on our platforms at the stations. [Cries of "No, no."] Oh, yes, it is. I think, too, that the Attorney-General will find that some time before I left office the attendance of the Royal Irish Constabulary at the stations on the platforms had been largely dispensed with, and that in a number of cases this duty was put an end to altogether. That being the case, the right hon. Gentleman might at all events have mentioned it in his reply, instead of telling the Committee, in order to raise a laugh, that the police were sent there when they had nothing better to do. That is not the case at all. They were sent there for very good reasons—because it was thought by the authorities to be necessary, and unless I am altogether wrong it was under the Party to which I belong that the change was made, and in a large number of cases the attendance of the police was dispensed with. The Attorney-General has complained that we on this side of the House have charged the Government with having been neglectful. Well, that is only half our charge. We go further than that, and say that through their want of complete and full action their policy with regard to Ireland has failed. Can there be a greater proof of that than the Amendment which has been moved by the hon. Member for Roscommon. The speech of every Member who has spoken from below the gangway has been in condemnation of the action of the Government, and has been consistent with the policy which the hon. Members adopt, but which the Government, though they may believe it in their hearts, are afraid openly to profess and avow. Hon. Gentlemen accused them of increasing the police force. What is the Attorney-General's reply? He tells us—

> "It is quite true we have increased the police; we are very sorry for it; we hope we will be able to decrease the numbers; we will do our best; we have only done it where necessary. The increase is only a small one, six counties, and so many in each county"—

and so on—a faint-hearted apology for doing their duty, for increasing the police force when necessary in order to give the protection of law to people in Ireland. For that the head of the Irish Bar makes an humble apology to the House of Commons, and hopes he will be forgiven this time, if he promises not to do it again. The position of the Government, of course, is an extremely difficult one. They are on the horns of a dilemma. They have professed that everything in Ireland is better than it has been before. We have had the Attorney-General telling us that all the statements about the unrest or agitation or agrarian offences are exaggerated, and that extra police protection is not necessary. Why for the first time for twenty two years is the Irish Government obliged to come to Parliament to ask for a Supplementary Vote for the Irish Constabulary? Why, if there is all this absence of unrest and agitation, is it that the Irish Government have been compelled to proclaim these counties and to come for a large Supplementary Vote, first for law expenses, and now for the police? What is the indictment of the hon. Gentleman below the gangway? It is that these extra charges for police, for law officers, and law expenses, are all improper and unnecessary, because the cases in respect of which they are incurred are not real cases. We have had the case of Mr. Persse quoted, and the Attorney-General attacks me for not having risen before in order to deal with it. He knows very well that I have no access to the Papers. I shall say—I had no intention of evading it—what my personal recollection and knowledge of the case is. Nobody knows better than the Attorney-General that the Papers dealing with the case are in the possession of the Irish Government. The Irish Government know what was the policy adopted by the Government when I was responsible. They know who the official was to whom application was made, and they know what were the particular circumstances which led to the reply Mr. Persse alleges he received. All I know of the case I am prepared to tell the House. An application was made when I was Chief Secretary for, I think, additional police. Mr. Persse was already, I believe—but I am not quite sure—under partial police protection. Application was made for additional police protection. I took the steps which I imagine the present Government would take. I caused inquiries to be made on the spot. I believed Mr. Persse was receiving such protection at the hands of the police as made his life and property secure. I gave instructions that everything was to be done that was necessary to protect him and his property. Having done that, my duty in the matter ended. I do not know what the circumstances of the Reports were. I have no copies of them, and I have no access to them. But I can say that so far as I am concerned there is nothing connected with the case that I have any desire to have concealed. I am surprised that the Attorney-General should try to divert the attack made directly not upon me, but upon the Government, by asking me to produce information which he knows well is open only to the Government.

MR. CHERRY: I have already explained to the House that I had not the papers. I have telegraphed for them, but they have not arrived. I thought the right hon. Gentleman would have remembered the circumstances.

MR. WALTER LONG: In the nearly thirty years I have been in this House I have never heard a more unfair suggestion made by any Member, and certainly not by any Member on the Front Bench. The Attorney-General must know perfectly well that cases of boycotting occurred during the time of all Chief Secretaries, and that they were the most difficult cases to deal with, but there was nothing connected with Mr. Persse's case in 1905 which brought it specially under my notice. Mr. Persse's case was one of those cases which came under my notice, and I make no complaint because hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway attacked me; but for the Attorney-General to try to divert the attack from himself and turn it on to me is the most astounding method of defence I have ever listened to. [NATIONALIST cries of "Oh, oh!"] I understand the charge to be in regard to Mr. Persse that the outrage was a bogus one. If it was a bogus outrage, by all means let the truth be ascertained, and let those be held responsible who have been guilty of so gross a crime. But that is no answer to Mr. Persse's statement that he is boycotted and unable to live as most men are. Surely he is as much entitled as any man to the protection of the law. If you want his land, why not legislate and get it by fair means? Surely it is no answer to say that Mr. Persse's boycott is inevitable because he occupies some of the land upon the Clanricarde estate. Are we to be told that this gentleman, if he is occupying land according to law, has to submit to persecution of this kind because his land is wanted for some other purpose? What an astounding argument that is. Why should they try to drive this man out of the occupation of his land by making his life intolerable? I do not think the Attorney-General need have apologised so humbly for the extra police employed in order to give protection to Mr. Persse. The position of the Government is one which commands our commiseration. They have told us that all our statements are exaggerated, and that cattle-driving has been described by hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House in most exaggerated language. When I was dealing with the question of cattle-driving upon a former occasion I quoted the language of the Attorney General himself, in which he said the country was getting into a state of turmoil and terror.

MR. CHERRY: I said it might lead to that if it was allowed to continue.

MR. WALTER LONG: The Attorney-General said that the reserve force at the depôts was so depleted that it would be necessary to proclaim certain counties so as to secure repayment from those counties. The Government claim that theirs is an administration of peace and conciliation, but now they have to admit that the police force was so depleted that they were obliged to proceed by proclamation under an Act of William III. In the indictment we have levelled against the Government, we have not used exaggerated language, because we have quoted the language of members of His Majesty's Government; we have not produced bogus figures, because they are the figures of the Government. It is, however, no part of our intention to vote against this Supplementary Estimate which is required for the service of the police, although we consider that the Government have done their duty in a way which had ensured failure rather than success. Because of that, we find it our duty to express in as strong language as we can our view of the incapacity of the Irish Government in dealing with the difficulty.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) said that the voting of an extra £5,000 for the Irish Constabulary was to Ireland a very serious matter, and this campaign of calumny was a subject which he thought might very properly engage the attention of the House even at 12.20. The net result of the debate was "that the duchess is very sorry she gave that tea party." They were all struck by one characteristic of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin—he kept away from Mr. Persse as long as he decently could, and he dropped him as soon as he decently could. He was not able to give them any specific recollections of the case when it was submitted to his notice. Surely the facts of the case must have fixed themselves on the attention of the right hon. Gentleman. The story had been published in the Unionist Press of this country, and it had also been published in continental countries and in America. The right hon. Gentleman was only able to tell the Committee that all necessary steps should be taken to protect Mr. Persse. But the real point was whether it was necessary to send down extra police to protect Mr. Persse. The Government had refused again and again to produce the police reports in this case or to hold an inquiry. Why were the papers not produced? He could tell the Committee. It was because the woes of Mr. Persse were only discovered last Sunday. They were discovered by a leading Tory Sunday newspaper on the day before the Home Rule debate. Mr. Persse was discovered last Sunday, and in the interval between then and now he had been found out. He was sorry the hon. Member for North Derry had gone away, because he wished to remind that hon. Gentleman that according to statistics the increase in the number of offences in county Derry was greater than that in any other county in Ireland. But in Derry the cost of extra police was £42, whilst in Roscommon it was £1,699. The political ideals of hon. Members above the Gangway was an Ireland in which every man would be a policeman. In Ireland the policeman was everything but a policeman. Frequently he was an author, the producer of threatening literature. Sometimes he maimed cattle, and got innocent men sent to gaol. The constabulary were now and again described as an army of occupation. It was really an army of no occupation. In his official capacity the Irish policeman was a mixture, of about equal parts of soldier and spy. He hoped the House and the British people would realise that resolute government in Ireland was considerably more expensive than the most generous form of Home Rule.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 63; Noes, 142. (Division List No. 20.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ambrose, Robert
Boland, John
Brace, William
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Dillon, John
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hogan, Michael
Hudson, Walter
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kelly, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Killop, W.
Meagher, Michael
Mooney, J. J.
Muldoon, John
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Grady, J.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Seddon, J.
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Verney, F. W.
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

NOES.

Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. (Heaton)
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Syndey Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth
Crossley, William J.
Davies David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Duckworth, James
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Erskine. David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Grant, Corrie
Gulland, John W.
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macnamara, Dr Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Chas. N. (Doncaster)
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C.E. (Edinburgh, Central
Priestley, W.E.B. (Bradford, E.
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Scott, A H (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Hn. A Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, Sir A (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampton
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Wiles, Thomas
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. J. A. Pease and Mr. Whiteley.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS IV.

3. £6,000 (Supplementary), Board of Education.

*SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University) said that before this Vote was passed there were one or two points on which he wished some information. After the somewhat dramatic discussion on the last Vote he was disinclined to detain the Committee for more than a few minutes. This was the first time a Vote on account of what was called the Imperial College of Science and Technology had been asked for. Very great interest had been taken in the foundation of this College because for a long time it had been felt that we in this country were very far behind other nations—especially Germany and America—in the facilities which were provided for the promotion of higher technical instruction. The Vote asked for was £6,000, but that was only part of the sum of £20,000 a year which was to be allocated by the Board of Education for the maintenance of the College. He would like to know how that sum of £6,000 had been arrived at as a first instalment.

But there was another question of greater importance than that. He would like some information as to how much of the total grant of £20,000 a year which was promised for the College was in excess of the cost and maintenance of the Royal College of Science and the Royal School of Mines which since 1st January had been taken over by the Imperial College of Science and Technology with which they were to be incorporated. According to the Estimates of last year the administration by the Board of Education of the Royal College of Science cost, including salaries and wages, £15,762, and laboratory expenses, £3,750; or a total of £19,512. Now, that sum did not include, so far as he could make out, the sum of £900, which was the cost of heating and lighting the Royal College of Science, so that the total cost amounted to £20,412. It was true that in this Estimate was included £1,000 for the maintenance of the new building recently erected in Imperial Institute Road, a sum which he believed was far less than the building would cost to maintain. But, against this, he found that there was in the year preceding the sum of £4,450 as against £3,750 for laboratory expenses upon last year's Estimates. It would appear, therefore, that the Government, in undertaking to give £20,000 a year to the new Imperial College, had made on the whole rather a good bargain, because the expense of maintenance of the two institutions which they had taken over and incorporated was really less than the College of Science and the School of Mines originally cost. It was quite certain that a much larger sum than this must be placed at the disposal of the governing body if the new college was to fulfil the important objects which were set forth in Lord Rosebery's letter in 1902, and to give that aid to British industry which it was anticipated it would give. He saw that it was stated in the charter of incorporation of the new college that divers persons were prepared to make munificent contributions towards the establishment and support of this Imperial institution. He would like to know the amount of those contributions and what contributions had been promised since the Report of the Departmental Committee of which he was a member had been issued two years since. It was also said in the charter that the Royal Commissioners of 1851 were prepared to appropriate a certain portion of their estate for the erection of new departments, and new buildings, and he would be glad to know whether, in the opinion of the Parliamentary Secretary, the funds at the disposal of the governng body were adequate for the erection of those departments on the appropriated sites and also for the remuneration of the professors, assistants, and lecturers, who would be required to give instruction. Unfortunately, it too often happened in this country that money was spent in bricks and mortar which should be paid in teachers' salaries, and that expensive buildings were erected which were imperfectly equipped. It was necessary that he should ask for this information at the present time, because he was sorry to say it appeared doubtful whether the London County Council would now grant the whole of the £20,000 towards the maintenance of the Imperial College which had been conditionally promised; and it was quite certain that unless the college was adequately endowed it would be unable to fulfil the great expectations which had been raised with regard to it. We in this country failed to realise the large sums of money which were required for higher technical instruction. In the United States that necessity was far better recognised, as was shown by the fact that between 1890 and 1901 no less a sum than £23,000,000 was subscribed from various sources for this express purpose. The future of this Imperial College intimately concerned the University of London with which he was connected. In the Report of the Departmental Committee a recommendation was made as to the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider what changes might be made in the character and constitution of the University of London, with a view to the amalgamation of the Imperial College with the University. It was an urgent matter for the University to know what their relations would be with the Imperial College, because if they were under the apprehension of a Royal Commission being appointed, they were prevented from entering upon many spheres of activity and undertaking various departments of work upon which they would enter if they knew that their position was absolutely settled. Was it the intention of the Government to appoint that Royal Commission, and if so, would they give some approximate date as to when they would do so?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. LOUGH, Islington, W.) said that when the charter was granted to the College it was arranged that £20,000 a year was to be given to it practically out of the funds of the Board of Education. The bargain was made by the late Government, of which the hon. Baronet was a supporter. There were other advantages which the Imperial College would obtain besides the grant of £20,000. It would receive the fees which were paid by students, which came to a considerable amount every year, and which had appeared in their estimates as an appropriation in aid. This would be a considerable advantage to the College. Then the Government had certain students of its own who, according to the arrangement, would now become of advantage to the Imperial College, as the Board would for the future have to pay the fees of those students to the Governing Body. This would make a considerable difference in favour of the College, and make the bargain a good one. The Government were very glad to carry out the arrangement, all the more because it was the policy of their predecessors. He had every reason to believe that the main part of the funds promised would be forthcoming. He would also remind the hon. Member that there would be a more suitable opportunity for discussing this question when the grant-in-aid came up. He had been asked if any funds were available for the putting up of buildings. He might say that he believed that the College was going steadily on with its work, and there was not the slightest apprehension that it would not be able to discharge its function. With regard to the other grants which had been alluded to the Government was bound by the arrangements made by their predecessors.

*SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.) said that with regard to what had been said about the University of London and the Imperial College of Science the uncertainty as to the future relations was embarrassing and disconcerting. As Vice-Chancellor of the University of London he sincerely trusted that the Board of Education would at an early period be able to tell them something as to what the policy of the Board was going to be in regard to this question. The Departmental Committee, upon whose Report the Charter was given, was divided as to whether the College should be an independent institution or whether it should be incorporated in the present University. It was necessary in the interests of higher education that an early decision should be arrived at as to what steps should be taken to determine the relationship of the Imperial College to the University.

Vote agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported this day.

Committee to sit again this day.

SUPPLY [10TH FEBRUARY] REPORT.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question proposed [11th February], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the First Resolution, 'That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £100, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the ending on the 31st day of March, 1908, for additional Expenditure in respect of the following Army services viz.:—

Vote 5. Volunteer Corps, Pay, Allowances, etc.—

	£
E. (*a*) Grants for the Extinction of Debts - - -	350,000
E. (*b*) Expenses of County Associations - - -	8,000
	358,000
Less Surpluses on other Votes	357,900
	100'."

Question again proposed.

MR. VICTOR CAVENDISH (Derbyshire, W.) asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he was yet in a position to make any statement as to whether the County Associations under the Territorial Army scheme would receive any grants in excess of those which had been already promised? There had been various rumours, but not one word had been heard from an official source, that it was probable that this grant might be increased, largely owing to the representations made in both Houses of Parliament, and from various parts of the country. If the hon. Gentleman was able to give them any information upon that subject, he (Mr. Cavendish) was quite certain that he would do a very considerable amount towards assisting and helping on the formation of these Associations through the country. The second point to which he wished to draw attention was one of which he had a somewhat peculiar knowledge, because he had the privilege and honour of being chairman of one of the County Associations, and he felt in a somewhat difficult position in regard to it. He would only take what had happened that day. That evening he received a large batch of correspondence with "urgent and confidential" marked on it, and he found it was entirely confined to military details, the questions in regard to which could only be answered by the commanding officers of the regiments and their adjutants, after consulting the necessary books. Yet they were requested to send in the answers, if possible, not later than Saturday next. It was perfectly obvious that, with the regiments scattered over a large area, it was quite impossible, with the immense amount of information which would have to be collected, for him to be able to forward the information, with the best will in the world. He had taken steps already, and luckily there was to be a meeting on the following day of the commanding officers of the three units in the county for which he was responsible, and whether it was prejudicial to the word "confidential" or not, he had placed the papers before them, and he hoped they would be able to furnish him with some answer. He would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if it would not be possible to take the County Associations a little more into the confidence of the Government? They had had voluminous papers sent them, dealing with an immense mass of details. But he had only been able to obtain one or two copies of these, and the matters referred to therein required most careful working out. They all wished to give all the information they could, and to assist the movement, but these matters needed most careful investigation on the part of the military officers responsible. It would assist the formation of the Associations to a very considerable extent if they could have more than one or two copies. The only other point was a matter which, he thought, had been already very clearly brought to the attention of the War Office, viz., the form of attestation. At one o'clock in the morning he did not think it was necessary for him to deal with it at any considerable length, or even make more than a passing reference to it. Could the hon. Gentleman give the House any further information on that point. Was it to be left in its existing form; was any change contemplated? He certainly did not wish now to criticise it; criticism had already been made elsewhere and in the Press. There was a great deal in that criticism which he supported, and he felt sure it would be greatly to the interest, both of the House and of the country, if the hon. Gentleman could give them the desired information.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford) asked a question with reference to the pay given to the cavalry soldier of the Territorial Force. He reminded the House that within the last two or three days he had asked a Question of the Secretary of State for War as to whether compensation would be given in the case of the loss of or damage to a soldier's hired horse during permanent duty? The answer he got was that no compensation would be paid by the Government in respect of loss or damage to horses used by the Territorial Army. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that a grant of £5 for fifteen days made to the County Associations (as against £5 for sixteen days hitherto paid) would enable the Association to take any steps (such as insurance) necessary to provide against damage or loss to hired horses. In the case of officers or men riding their own horses, it was provided that the £5 should be paid over to the officer or man on the same terms as those on which the Association received it. When the Territorial Army Bill was under discussion in that House, it was stated by the Secretary of State for War, by the Financial Secretary, and by the hon. Member for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire, that the £5 horse allowance granted to the Imperial yeoman was a part of his pay. Now he saw that the right hon. Gentleman said that the £5 was to be paid to the Association for the general purposes of the Association, not to the man as part of his pay. Thus there would be an appreciable difference between the pay of the Imperial yeoman and that of the cavalry soldier of the Territorial Force. It seemed to him that it was an unheard of way of reducing the pay, and it certainly was not understood by the House to be so stated by the Secretary of State for War, and the other two hon. Members to whom he had referred, who were his coadjutors during the time the Bill was under discussion. Was it the case that this reduction of pay was to be added to the other reduction of pay, which would fall on the Imperial yeoman who enlisted in the Territorial Force? His pay hitherto had been 5s. 6d. a day; it would now be reduced to 2s. 8d. a day. If this sum, which had been looked upon as horse allowance, in addition to part of his pay, was to be reduced, he thought it would be another deterrent to the yeoman taking on with the Territorial Force. He would remind the hon. Gentleman that no chance should be thrown away of endeavouring to persuade the Imperial yeoman to join the Territorial Force. They were not overburdened with men, and no effort should be spared to add to the Territorial Force; but if this reduction of pay took place, it would discourage the men. The reduction was quite unprecedented, and up to that time there had never been a case in which there had been a reduction in the pay in the units of the British Army. The yeoman would resent this reduction and it would very naturally occur to him that if he was worth 5s. 6d. this year, it was very hard that he should be worth only 2s. 8d. next year.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) wished to add one word to what his right hon. friend had said about the attestation form, and he did so, not with the slightest desire to go into any detail, as the House was familiar with the matter, but because he did not think His Majesty's Government realised how serious was the question involved. Officers in the existing Volunteer Force were required to ascertain whether their men would continue to serve, and whether they would join the Territorial Force. In his own case he was supposed to make a Return on March 6th, and the men very naturally wanted to know the conditions of service and the form of oath they would be required to take. There was no time to be lost. The Government had said they were establishing a Committee to consider the form of attestation. He had asked when the Committee would be set up, but owing to the regrettable absence of the Secretary of State for War, the Question could not be answered, and he was requested to put it again next week. There was one week of the fortnight gone. Then, he supposed, the Committee would sit for some weeks and then another attestation form would be drawn up. The case was much too urgent to be delayed. Why could not the Government draw up a form of attestation in an hour with the bare minimum of the questions which it was absolutely necessary to ask? Not only was this difficulty arising with the Volunteers now serving, but this was the time of year when most of the best recruiting was done. They got their recruits in from the middle of January to the middle of March. This matter was being talked about all over the place, and recruits would not take the form of oath which the new attestation form required. They were not going, suddenly and contrary to all their previous expectations, to come in and take an oath which would compel them to serve anywhere, when required; they would not do it. He would go so far as to say that very few of the Volunteer officers who were at present serving would submit that attestation form to their men. He would not, for one, and the whole territorial scheme would fall to pieces unless this was dealt with in the course of the next few days. The matter was one of extreme urgency, and for the War Office to waste weeks on a matter of this kind, which the Secretary of State for War could draw up in a few minutes himself was the height of folly. He hoped that the hon. Gentleman representing the War Office that evening would be able to give them some satisfactory assurance that they who wished to do their best, as everyone did, to bring recruits in and to pursuade men, who were good Volunteers now, to go on and form the new Territorial Force, might have a chance of meeting with some success, and that the territorial scheme might have some prospect of success, instead of a certainty of failure.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.) apologised for the absence of the Secretary of State for War, owing to his being on the sick list. Dealing with the matter of the attestation form he said that the Secretary of State informed the House on Monday that the Committee was immediately to come together, in order to consider this subject, and frame a form of oath on the best and most experienced advice competent to deal with the subject. He could assure the House that there would be no delay whatever in the matter, and as had been already promised it would be speedily dealt with. He did not think he could add anything in answer to the Question, beyond that the matter was receiving the very careful consideration of the authorities of the War Office and the Secretary of State, who, he was sure, would be able to find a satisfactory solution. With regard to the Question of the noble Lord, as to the horse allowance, the proposal was that the allowance of £5 per horse was to be paid over to the Association, who were to hire the horses. The man who brought his own horse was to get the £5 paid over to him, and out of that, he thought, he was expected to find insurance for his horse. So far, he understood it to be said that he was in a worse position than before. He was sorry the noble Lord had not given him some intimation of his intention to bring this question forward, so that he could have inquired into the matter.

VISCOUNT VALENTIA said his point was that the £5 per horse was to be paid now to the Association, whereas it used to be paid to the man as part of his pay.

MR. BUCHANAN said that the noble Lord was much more intimately acquainted with the Yeomanry than he was, but he believed the £5 was to be paid over to the Associations, as stated. With regard to the document marked "Urgent and confidential," referred to by the right hon. Member for West Derbyshire, he explained that the War Office found it necessary in respect to the many details which had to be settled, to send out, in confidence, what were the draft proposals, but which were not absolutely settled, to the chairmen of the Associations, asking them in confidence for their opinions. He could assure the House that within the next week, or very shortly, he hoped to be able to issue to all the Associations—in full detail, and no longer as confidential documents—the detailed memoranda, upon the various points relating to financial regulations. With regard to the question which had been constantly pressed on them, as to the insufficiency of the sum proposed to be devoted for establishment charges, they had considered the matter very seriously in conjunction with those best qualified to know. They had come to the conclusion that they had made out, to a certain degree, their case, and the Government were prepared to increase the amount for the establishment charges which they proposed to give to the Associations. He did not feel entitled at that moment to name the figure, but it was a substantial increase. Although they had the consent of the Treasury, they had not the written consent, and therefore he thought it would not be proper at that moment to go into further details; but he was perfectly certain that in substance, at any rate, it would be in accordance with the amount proposed to them by the various Associations of the country.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) said he did not know that that question would have been raised that evening; but as that was the last opportunity they would have to ask the War Office to remedy what he thought was a very grave mistake, and which really meant in his judgment a breach of faith with that House, he would like to make a few remarks. They found now that in the case of the Yeomanry, the insurance for the horses would have to be paid by the men themselves. There had been a reduction in the pay of the Yeomanry—a thing, they were told, which had never happened in the last 300 years. With very great difficulty those belonging to these forces had got their men to continue their services, and to take part in this great patriotic movement. They had believed that their pay would be continued. They had got them with very great difficulty, and now came this further reduction of pay, which had never been mentioned before, and which no one dreamt of when the Bill was passed. It was resented by the men, and it was resented in all quarters of that House, as a little bit of petty cheese-paring, which might ruin the cavalry of the Territorial Force. There was a great advantage in the Government taking the insurance, because the further they spread their risk, the less the cost would be. To show how much that was the case, instructions had been sent in some counties to the General Officers Commanding, that the insurance should be spread over the whole county, thus reducing the cost. But how much better it would be to spread it all over the country! He appealed for the last time and with confidence to the hon. Member representing the War Office, not on the ground of economy—though that was strong—but on the ground of keeping faith with a body of men endeavouring to serve the State to the best of their ability. They had reduced their pay far more than they had ever reduced the pay of any other men who served their country; and now, when Parliament was not sitting, they had insisted on their making up the insurance themselves. He begged the Government to withdraw this Order.

VISCOUNT MORPETH (Birmingham, S.) congratulated the hon. Gentleman on the fact that the amount of the establishment charges was to be increased, because it was universally thought amongst Volunteer officers that the Government had offered a very inadequate sum to carry on the administrative work of the battalions. When were they to have the amended figures? It was very urgent that they should have them at once. The Act came into operation on the 31st of March, and there they were, almost at the end of February, past the eleventh hour, unable to secure secretaries for the County Associations, because they did not know how much they would be able to pay them. The whole success of the scheme, as regarded the County Associations, depended on the man who was to be the secretary. If it were to be a case of an inadequate pittance, to be paid to some retired officer, the County Association would be at a disadvantage, and they could not insist on getting the right man. If the figures were not issued as rapidly as possible, the appointments would be left over to the last minute and the result would be failure; the War Office would then say that it was the fault of the County Associations, because they had mismanaged and muddled the thing, and that it was not their own fault in waiting till the last minute to tell the County Associations what they intended to do.

COLONEL HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.) said he had a clear recollection of the discussion which took place both in and outside of that House last year, and he could not conceive what had entered into the brains of any of the officials of the War Office this year, that at this late hour they should suddenly spring this cheese-paring economy upon them. He could assure the hon. Member that there was nothing more calculated to destroy what little enthusiasm would have been raised in the country, than this sort of regulation. In Wales also they had their grievances, but he would spare the House at that late hour. They were to have had the honour of a conference with the Secretary of State that day, but it had had to be postponed, and he hoped they might have it in a very short time. Red-tapeism had threatened to strangle the enthusiasm that was rising in the country, and he could assure the hon. Member that if this conduct continued it would have a most serious effect upon the possible success of the scheme for which all of them, on both sides of the House, wished to do their best.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) asked whether some arrangement could not be made for retaining the non-commissioned officers in some of the battalions, half of which he understood were to be disbanded. He had a case before him in connection with the 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers. That magnificent battalion had at present sixteen companies, and eight of those companies were to disappear under the proposal of the Secretary of State for War. Some 100 non-commissioned officers, in the half of that battalion which was to be disbanded, would be turned adrift. They had, many of them, been a number of years in that or other battalions; some of them had as much as nineteen years service, and had been hoping that they would have an opportunity of obtaining the Volunteer Decoration. Now, through no fault of their own, these non-commissioned officers—reliable and excellent Volunteers as they were—were to be turned adrift, and would lose an opportunity of gaining this decoration, or of continuing to serve their King and country. It seemed a very unnecessary thing that this should be allowed to happen. He could not understand why the right hon. Gentleman could not retain the non-commissioned officers upon the strength of the remaining companies, or make some other arrangements by which their services might be retained for the country. The men felt the humiliation very strongly, and he thought the least that could be done under the circumstances, if it were really necessary to cut down these excellent battalions, was that the services of the non-commissioned officers should be in some way or other retained for the benefit of the country. It was a deplorable thing that those who were willing to serve should be precluded from the opportunity of doing so, while at the same time they had any quantity of people in this country who would not do an hour's work, or raise a finger to put themselves to any inconvenience in order to qualify themselves for any evil day which might come upon them. It seemed part of this policy of cheese-paring to which he referred a few days ago. Surely these men could be kept on the strength of the other battalions, and not be exposed to the humiliation of being shot out of the service. He hoped and trusted the hon. Gentleman in charge of these Estimates might have something to say to them about this matter, so that they might be reassured. He was sure the country as a whole would not endorse with any satisfaction a policy which made it impossible for these men to continue to serve with their colours.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he could reassure the hon. Member that non-commissioned officers would be retained as supernumeraries. With regard to the question raised about the Yeomanry, he would communicate to the Secretary of State the views that had been expressed that night, and doubtless he would deal with the matter. With regard to the Question of the noble Lord opposite, he hoped the figures would be out at a very early date indeed. He had given the reasons why he could not name them at this moment, but the increase was substantial, and he thought it would be satisfactory.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) asked the hon. Member to call the attention of the Secretary of State for War to the question of the separation allowance for privates. He was perfectly well aware that every hon. Member was pressing the War Office for further expenditure on the Army, whilst the House collectively pressed for a reduction of the expenditure. As there was in his own constituency a good deal of feeling on this point, he hoped, however, that the Financial Secretary would bring it before the Secretary of State.

Mr. CLEMENT EDWARDS (Denbigh District): Will what was said by the hon. Gentleman as to the retention of non-commissioned officers as supernumeraries apply to the non-commissioned officers of the Militia battalion?

Mr. BUCHANAN: I cannot answer that Question now.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Joseph Pease,*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 21st February, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the county of Worcester (Western or Bewdley Division), in the room of Alfred Baldwin, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Henry Forster.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

MADRAS RAILWAY COMPANY (PURCHASE) [ANNUITIES.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question again proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the creation of annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings, and three pence, agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company, and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending the 31st day of December, 1907."—(*Sir Henry Fowler*).

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. Considered; Amendments made. Bill to be read the third time upon Tuesday next.

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill. [Lords]. Considered; to be read the third time upon Tuesday next.

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill. Ordered, "That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill, with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Barrow-on-Humber: Brockley and Deptford; Central Hackney; Chester le Street; Crewkerne; Lewisham; London; Raunds; Richmond; St. Helen's; South Shields; Weardale; and, Woodbridge; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Highbridge; Langley Moor (two); Liverpool; New Sleaford; Sheffield (two); Tring; Watford; and, William Woodall Lodge, I.O.G.T.; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA (No. 1, 1908).

Copy presented, of Further Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (MEMORANDUM ON ESTIMATES.

Copy presented, of Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the Army Estimates of 1908–9 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN.

Copy presented, of Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Aberdeen for 1906–7 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 66.]

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Rateable Value of Admiralty Land near Greenock.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland, what was taken as the annual value for rating of the 10 acres of land and $4\frac{3}{4}$ acres of foreshore near Greenock, purchased recently by the Admiralty for £27,225, at the time of that purchase.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am informed that the land referred to formed part of a subject entered in the assessors roll of the annual value of £75, and which was about 48 acres in area. No entry was made in the roll in respect of the foreshore.

Reduction of the Coastguard Service.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, if there has been any reduction in the personnel of the Coastguard service during the last six months; and, if so, will he state the details.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) There has been a reduction of 103 in the personnel of the Coastguard during the period in question, due to ordinary wastage.

Rathkenny Farm—Application of Leonard.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that a man named Leonard has applied to the Estates Commissioners for a portion of the farm from which James Gore was evicted on the estate of R. B. Balfour, situate at Rathkenny, Slane, county Meath; are the Commissioners aware that he is already in occupation of a farm of over 20 acres; and by whom was his application recommended.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that Patrick Leonard, who was employed as herd on the lands, is desirous of obtaining a portion of the farm formerly occupied by James Gore. The Commissioners are not aware that Leonard is already in possession of a farm of 20 acres, but are informed that his brother has such a farm. The responsibility for distributing the land, if acquired, rests with the Commissioners themselves, and the matter is at present under their consideration. Leonard's application has not been recommended from any outside source.

War Office and Trade Union Rates of Pay.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): To ask the Secretary for War, whether the War Office have recently engaged a carpenter at Shoeburyness at the rate of 8*d.* per hour; whether he is aware that the standard rate for such work in the district is 9*d.* per hour; and whether the War Office will take steps to act as a model employer by adopting the current trade union rate of pay.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A carpenter was recently engaged by the War Department at Shoeburyness on probation at the rate of 8*d.* an hour. The rate of 9*d.* is recognised as the standard rate at Shoeburyness for fully qualified carpenters. The carpenter in question will have his pay raised to 9*d.* as soon as he is certified to be a competent workman.

Scottish Tailors and Officers' Outfits.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that in many cases of young officers joining Scottish regiments, where they have actually placed their orders for outfits with military tailors in Scotland, pressure is brought to bear on them by the adjutants of the regiments they are about to join to have their uniforms, &c., made in London, and that such pressure leads to cancelment of the Scottish orders and also to the subsequent orders from these officers in many cases going to London; and whether he will take steps to prevent the continuance of this practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The selection of a tailor by a young officer on appointment to the Army is left to his discretion. No case of pressure such as is indicated in the Question has been brought to the notice of the Secretary of State, but he would certainly deprecate any such pressure being exercised.

Militia Officers and Active Service.

MR. HEDGES (Kent, Tonbridge): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether his attention has been called to the fact that, under Clause 3 of the Army Order of the 23rd December 1907, Militia officers transferred to the new Special Reserve will, on mobilisation, have no chance of active service; and whether it is his intention that officers, who in many cases have already done good service in the field, should be prohibited under the new conditions from such service in the future.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) If my hon. friend will kindly turn to paragraph 63 of the Army Order he will find that officers of the Special Reserve will be liable, on mobilisation, to be called out for permanent service at Home and Abroad. The intention is to utilise these officers in the field to replace vacancies and wastage in the line battalions.

Militia Officers on the Special Reserve.

MR. HEDGES: To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether Clause 65 of the Army Order of 23rd December, 1907, is intended to convey to officers of the Militia transferring to the Special Reserve that they will be junior for command and precedence to regular officers, irrespective of the age, experience, and active service of these Militia officers; and, if so, what opportunities will be open to them for promotion if their position is thus permanently junior to the regular part of the establishment, as laid down in Appendices V. and VI.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) For command and precedence officers of the Special Reserve will, as such, be junior of their rank to regular officers on the active service list. As regards promotion, that of the regular officers on the active list who are on the Third or Special Reserve battalion will run through the First and Second line battalions. The promotion of the Special Reserve officers will run, *inter se*, through the Third or Special Reserve battalion only.

Case of John Gillespie, late Inniskilling Fusiliers.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that John Gillespie, who served in the Inniskilling Fusiliers from 1892 to 1904, when he was discharged, receiving the character Very Good, having spent eleven years and three months in foreign service and obtained two medals with two clasps, has been an inmate, owing to stroke of paralysis super-induced by hardship endured in British campaigns, of Ballyshannon Workhouse; and whether it is intended to take any, and, if so, what, steps by way of pension or otherwise to relieve him from destitution.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The case is being investigated. The decision arrived at will as soon as possible be communicated to the hon. and learned Member.

Territorial Army—Grants for Officers' Outfits.

MR. BEALE (Ayrshire, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the grant and allowance for the cost and upkeep of a service kit to be made to Volunteers who transfer to the Territorial Army will apply to officers who so transfer, or whether such officers will receive any grant or allowance for the purpose

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The grant for clothing and equipment made to County Associations in respect of non-commissioned officers and men does not apply to officers. Officers of the Territorial Force will receive the £20 outfit allowance on first appointment on conditions similar to those now existing for Volunteer officers. Where the transfer of a Volunteer officer to the Territorial Force necessitates a change or alteration of uniform, the officer so transferred will on application be allowed the cost of alteration, not exceeding the £20 grant.

Crimean and Indian Mutiny Veterans in Workhouses.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that no fewer than 1,029 men who served in the Crimea or the Indian Munity, or both those campaigns, were on the 24th January last inmates of workhouses in the United Kingdom; and what explanation, if any, has the War Office to offer of this circumstance, or what remedies, if any, are proposed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am not in a position to confirm the accuracy of the figures quoted by the hon. Member. All Crimean and Mutiny veterans who have been awarded a war medal, if of the age of seventy and in necessitous circumstances, are eligible for a pension of at least 1s. a day, and at the present date practically all these veterans have reached the age of seventy. In special cases such as wounded men and others, increases of pension above 1s. a day may be granted.

Army Boy Recruits sent on Foreign Service.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether on medical grounds, recruits enlisting at Home are not sent to India until they attain the age of twenty years; whether boys enlisting from the Royal Hibernian School or the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Chelsea, are liable at the age of fourteen or fifteen, if they happen to enlist in a regiment which is in India, to be sent there, after three months' training at Home; and whether, if so, steps can be taken at least to warn the boys or their guardians of the consequences of enlisting in a regiment which is in India.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The twenty years' rule for India originalted in a pledge given by Mr. Cardwell, and this limit of age was fixed mainly on medical grounds. Boys are not sent to any stations abroad if under fifteen years of age, and evidence shows that there is no objection to boys being sent at this age under the conditions of service applicable to boys. The consent of parents or guardians is always obtained prior to the enlistment of boys.

Able-bodied Paupers.

MR. HADDOCK (Lancashire, North Lonsdale): To ask the President of the Local Government Board, what was the number of able-bodied paupers in health and not in health, respectively, in the various Poor Law institutions in England and Wales for July, 1907.

MR. HADDOCK: To ask the President of the Local Government Board, what was the number of able-bodied paupers aged sixteen to twenty-five, twenty-five to forty, fifty and upwards, respectively, in the various Poor Law institutions, in health and not in health, for the month of July, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) Perhaps I may conveniently reply to these two Questions together. On 1st July, 1907, the number of able-bodied adult paupers in health (including men and women) receiving indoor relief was 14,264. The number of able-bodied adults receiving indoor relief on that date who were sick or temporarily disabled was 26,581 (see page vi. of the published Return, No. 108 I., of 1907.) In the half-yearly Returns children are distinguished from the adults, but the adults are not classified in age-groups. The latest Return in which particulars are given of various age-groups, so as to distinguish the old from the young and from those in middle life, is the special Return, No. 113, of Session 1904. That Return, however, did not follow the grouping mentioned in the Question.

SWEATED INDUSTRIES BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire): The Sweated Industries Bill which I have to introduce to the House deals with a problem occupying attention in many quarters; a subject which has ripened rapidly since it was first brought to the attention of this House by my right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean some time ago. Even now it is undergoing very careful study by a Select Committee of this House. The problem is acute, complex, and vital. The evil is admitted. Sweated industries exhibitions and newspapers and personal experience make it very probable that many hon. Members know more about it than I myself. It merges into the question of unemployment, but it has this variation, that so far as the victims are concerned there is no necessity to ask for any proof of their willingness to work. There is no need to beware of shirkers. Granted the evil, what is the remedy? What is to be the line of our experiment to restore self-reliance, self-respect, and the power of self-help to these persons? Here they are —men, women, and children overworked, underpaid, underfed, living in unhealthy and often degrading surroundings. Must we intensify our repressive measures, or study the means which have elevated labour in other ranks and extend them? By organisation labour has done much for itself. But organisation has been by individual trades. Some are still not so highly organised as those which have developed most, such as the cotton and engineering trades. It would, I think, be possible to grade them, passing down to less and less perfect organisms, until you come to a mass of labour which can only be galvanised into life by a great crisis such as the dock strike. But below that there is a lower depth. You reach below a region without form and void, and darkness moves upon the face of it. The atoms have no cohesion. They are enemies of one another because the employer is continually taking advantage of the need of one to undercut another. The starvation test is constant and universal in its pressure. Nay, a seige test; for many a home is beseiged, and it is the last stand of the little garrison that makes them the sweater's victim. They would throw down their arms and surrender if fighting for themselves alone. To keep the home together they shun no exertion, spare no sacrifice, give blood and tissue, drop by drop, nerve by nerve. In this gross darkness we attempt to say by this Bill, "Let there be light." Let us have, on the lines that have been successful in other trades by voluntary action, public authority to let in the daylight and introduce some order and some system. Attempt after attempt has been made by voluntary effort to induce combined action in order to secure, if nothing else, a recorded list of prices, and failure has followed failure. Again and again a point has been reached at which employers willing to advance wages or improve conditions have declared the only obstacle to be neighbours who cannot be reached by any existing means. You find in one neighbourhood the amount that can be earned for a certain kind of work is 7s. 6d. a week, and on the other side of the road 14s. and 16s. is being paid for similar work. One firm recently announced a reduction from a rate which gave £1 a week to less than half. An arbitration board was called in, and they found that neighbours were paying even less, and there was no power to alter it so long as needy workers would go there. The workers are too poor to combine in order that they may support those whom they may induce not to go into any of the places where sweating rates have been introduced. They cannot combine to take advantage of such services as Mr. C. R. Askwith, now of the Railway Department, has rendered in the lace and the shoe trades. To leave these people where they are, to stand aside, is impossible. In my opinion we must as far as possible follow the natural growth of labour in this country, the orderly development of trade unionism. Where this natural evolution stops or lags the State must step in and endeavour to initiate the regulation of conditions which are now disastrous to labour, and which are not creditable, nor in my opinion profitable, to capital, and which are, above all, degrading to the race. The first step is inquiry. Mr. Askwith in his evidence attaches great importance to the mere power to hold an inquiry. Even without a wages board he holds that the fact that there was this power of holding an inquiry would be of immense benefit, and would have prevented unfortunate strikes which he indicated, besides being of use in those cases where a strike was impossible. It is a very significant fact that, in cases where arbitration boards exist, not only the workmen but also the employers have asked for proceedings to be instituted. Under this Bill a trade union or trades council or six employers or workmen can ask for an inquiry. The Home Secretary then directs an inquiry, and if he thinks fit as the result of that inquiry he directs a wages board to be established. Our desire is to get, for two or three trades as a beginning, representatives of masters and workmen in a locality sitting at one board, with an independent chairman elected or appointed, and with power to draw up a list of wages which shall be legal for the special trade in the district of the wages board. Such tribunals cannot be said to be new in form. In the duties to be performed there is nothing new. What is proposed occurs and is carried out in many trades. The wages boards have on them local men with full knowledge of every local and personal circumstance. The trade unions allow for these differences now, and the trade union with which I am in touch most, the Typographical Association, has a large number of branches and as many lists each showing some local variety; showing differences in wages from 26s. to 48s., and in hours from forty-two to fifty-four per week. The wages vary, and other conditions are already allowed for by local branches sitting to consider local circumstances. By this Bill it is provided that the minimum rate of wages may be fixed for any kind of work, and may be different for different kinds of work and for different parts of the district; it may be fixed for different classes and be different for different classes. The principle novel to our law is that the sanction of the State is given to the decision, and the payment of less than the minimum is a punishable offence, so that the dishonest sweater within the area can no longer force the good employers, who are, I believe, the great majority, to undercut and degrade the conditions of their workers. For him, I hope the House will show no tenderness. Some fear has been expressed that terrible consequences would follow on this unprecedented State action. But it has been done, and has not resulted in any evil. In Melbourne it has been done, and the experience of Melbourne has proved that wages boards are possible and that the effect has been good. My hon. friend the Member for Tottenham may deal further with that point, but it has been done, and I claim that to apply this remedy cautiously to a few of our trades in view of the extent the evil has reached in this country is both wise and prudent. It is not a violent remedy. It is elastic, and allows for every condition of locality, exigency, and trade, and variety in the position of worker and employer. In effect it is an extension of the work that Mr. C. R. Askwith and others have already done. What is required is the patient drawing up of lists of wages in their wide complexity and infinity of detail. What shall we gain by this experiment? We shall at all events gather valuable authentic information and give public opinion an opportunity of manifesting itself, and where the system is applied we shall forward the work of organisation in that particular trade, which is itself a distinct advantage. No national interest will be injured. Such arrangements in other trades have not injured capital. Capital has nine lives, and has a shrewd way of passing on any unbearable burden to the consumer. But I am not sure that the consumer will suffer in price. On the contrary, I think he will gain in quality. Take the case of shirts, for instance. Shirts are made at 9d. a dozen, ¾d. each; the materials cost 1s. each and the retail price is 1s. 10d., the margin being 9¼d. Supposing you raise the wages 33 per cent., the cost without the establishment cost is 1s. 1d. instead of 1s. 0¾d., while the margin is 9d. instead of 9¼d. I do not think the additional farthing would trouble the consumer. I do not think our efficiency as a producing country would be lower. Sweating employers are often bad business men. Better organisation will produce more and better work. Capital need not fear this attempt to enable the poorest workers to sell their labour to better advantage, measured in value by the rates paid by the best employers, and not by their own needs. The proposal is not for a statutory minimum to which the wages board must conform, but for power to be given to representatives whose interests will unite in keeping their trade in a locality to fix varying rates. Capital need not fear. Capital requires a working partner whose capital is flesh and blood, and the more efficient the latter, the better for the former. The present system makes inefficients. It breeds inefficients—broods of inefficients—and a better wage would tend to diminish the stock. There is one aspect which needs touching with tender hands. What of the old man and inefficient woman who may be left out? Well, what happens to them now? What does the sweater do for them? But the old man will not necessarily lose his work. If he is an out-worker at a low peice-rate the sweater only employs him because no one will work for less, and if the sweater is prevented from paying anyone less the old man may still be employed, and the increase will at least tend to make him more efficient. Some may fall out. For those it is an unequal struggle, a losing fight, in which sooner or later the worker must fail, to the loss of herself and children. To some the increased rate of pay will mean a restoration to efficiency. They do not get a living wage, but a dying wage, and you cannot be said to be interfering with their living when you try to make better regulations. Mr. Askwith upon this said when questioned before the Committee—

> "It seems to me that the least efficient and really physically incapable workers just now earn such very low rates that really their misery could not be much greater even if they did not have the work. After all, what is 2s. 6d. a week or 3s. a week? It seems to me that even if a certain number of very inefficient workers were crushed out they are already assisted by charitable agencies and by the Poor Law, and it would simply be a question of increasing

their Poor Law relief. Again and again women have said to me, We wonder why we do this work; it would be easier to starve without the work than to starve with it. It is the same thing. Even to-day people who are trying to work die of starvation—that has been proved in the coroners' courts—and it does not seem to me that the hardship you are thinking of could be very much greater than it already is."

But even that aspect, which must touch every sensitive heart, does not make me shrink from this problem, but rather be more determined to begin the work of preventing the conditions which produce such cases. As a moderate but decided step I commend this Bill to the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary and to the House. I hope the House will read the Bill a second time and refer it to the Select Committee, by whom as we know from the evidence already published, an inquiry is being conducted with distinguished ability and assiduity into this matter. I do not ask the House by any means to override the Committee, but to refer the Bill to them to confirm our confidence in them, as an indication of our feeling of the urgency of the question and of our desire that their deliberations shall be consummated by speedy action. I beg to move.

*MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): In seconding this Motion I should like to thank the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean for all that he has done for this question, and for drafting the Bill in the form in which it is before us to-day. I should also like to thank my hon. friend who has just sat down for his valuable and eloquent speech. Every section of the House will, I think, be in sympathy with our attempt to remedy an admitted evil. We do not suggest any further inquiry as to the extent of the evil concerned, as a Select Committee is dealing at the present moment with the most important aspect of the evil. It is a very difficult problem without doubt, and everyone who contributes to the solution of it will earn the gratitude of this House and of the nation as a whole. It has always seemed to me that modern industrialism in all civilised countries has grown faster than the moral sense. The millions of the industrial poor in England are the result of our failure to develop this moral sense. The evil we deplore is not a question of free trade or protection, and I trust we shall be allowed to-day to discuss the question without those subjects being introduced. My own experience in East London as well as in Chicago and New York goes to prove that you find sweating in all large cities, whether free trade or protectionist. The country makes no difference; there are sweated workers in all, and we cannot help pitying their condition. Charity is no remedy. Charity has been tried. A very great number of my own personal friends have struggled to the best of their ability to reduce the evils which arise from sweating in our cities, but I know no one who is willing to admit that their efforts have been successful. Practically the only association for dealing with sweated workers which exists to-day is that which has been called the Home Workers' Aid Association, established on philanthropic lines. It encourages thrift, and gives benefits in the shape of holidays at a seaside home. We have no association or trade union whatever uniting workers who are engaged in the lowest forms of industry in East or South London. Public opinion is beginning to recognise that something must be done. The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed in 1888, shows clearly that the conscience of the nation had been aroused to the greatness of the evil. Every inquiry made since only confirms the statement by that Select Committee. Sweating is not merely found in East London, it is also found in West London. The tendency is for it to become the organic disease of certain trades. The hon. Member referred to the cheap shirt. Sweating is also found in connection with the making of articles of luxury. Take, for example, the manufacture of costly embroideries and garments in West London. At a Conference held at the Guildhall in October, 1906, a delegate appointed by the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses stated that—

> "There were thousands of gentlemen who believed that their clothes were made under fair and sanitary conditions, but he assured the Conference that the very highest in the land were clothed with garments made in sweating dens. He knew shops covered with royal warrants which never employed men engaged under trade union conditions. Not one naval officer in twenty had his uniform made under fair conditions. The uniforms of admirals and vice-admirals were made in some of the filthiest dens in Portsmouth. But for the law of libel the Press and the trade unions might expose these scandals."

I cannot confirm that statement from my own knowledge, but I can confirm similar statements that have been made. I do know that some of the costliest garments made in West London are made under insanitary conditions in sweating dens. I have often gone into one and two-roomed tenements and found costly garments lying on the bed and on the floor. It is well known that there have been cases of infectious disease discovered in these very dens. The evil, therefore, is widespread, and it must be dealt with, not only in East London but in West London, and in every city in the kingdom. It is quite clear, as I said before, that philanthropy and charity are no solution, and that all the remedies tried up to now have been failures. Is there any remedy likely to be effective? I have admitted that this is a most difficult problem to deal with. I believe there are risks of creating other evils, but after many years study of the question I think it is right to face the risks and make the attempt, and we can best discover what are the risks by looking at what has been done in other countries. May I ask the House to consider just for a moment what has been done by the wages boards of Victoria and by the Arbitration Law of New Zealand, with both of which I have had practical experience on the spot. The experiment made in Victoria has, on the whole, been successful. The Victorian Act dates from 1896, and by it, as under this Bill, special boards can be appointed to fix wages or piecework rates in certain trades. By the Consolidating Act of 1905 other boards can be created by Resolution of both Houses, and there are now in Victoria over forty such boards in existence. My own experience of the working of the Act in Victoria is very limited, because I went there only two years after the Act had been passed. Therefore I had few opportunities of seeing whether the Act had proved successful or not; but there are many Members of this House, notably the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean, who have studied the working of the Act, and who are convinced that on the whole it has been successful. The boards consist of from four to ten members. I believe the Bill before the House proposes that the boards should consist of from six to ten and an impartial chairman. The board has power to fix wages either by time or piece, to determine hours, overtime, and the number and wages of apprentices and improvers. Many of the features of the Victorian boards have been eliminated from the present Bill. The Bill before the House deals with wages alone. That, after all, is the most important question. The Bill also, in Clause 8, fixes a definite term of years for the wages board. I need not go into details, for, if the House is good enough to give the Bill a Second Reading, it will be referred to a Committee where all the details can be thrashed out. The only difficulty in Melbourne, so far as my own experience goes, is with the Chinese. Inspectors have had to admit that it is one of the principal obstacles to the successful working of the Act with which they have had to deal. The ways of the Chinese are peculiar; they are "child-like and bland," and absolutely impassive. The result is that the inspectors and officials are deceived. The master unites with the Chinaman to elude the provisions of the Act because the Chinaman is willing to work for a very low wage. Notwithstanding all this if we may judge from the last report we have received, the average wage in eighteen trades under the wages board is 5s. 9¼d. per week higher than the average wage in those same trades where there is no wages board. That is to say, a district which has a wages board has raised the average wage by 5s. 9¼d. per week. That is valuable testimony to the successful working of the Act, and, although I admit that it is not conclusive, it does tend to show that the Act raises wages and maintains them at a certain level. There is another important point about the working of the Victorian Act, and that is that the minimum wage does not tend to become the maximum. It is sometimes argued that the tendency will be for the minimum wage to become the maximum, but in almost every case under the Victorian Act the wage is above the legal limit, showing that when you apply the right kind of pressure, the tendency is for wages to go up. Public opinion shines in on the dark places of the sweating dens, and there is generally an improvement, not only in wages, but in other conditions. I believe that would be the case under the present Bill. I feel there is so much sympathy with this proposal in all quarters of the House that long speeches are not necessary. I trust that this sympathy will find practical expression, and that there will be no real opposition to the Bill. It is an attempt to deal with a very great evil. I admit that both in New Zealand (where wages in the tailoring trades were immediately increased 15 per cent.) and Victoria the circumstances are different from those which prevail in this country, but taking into account the different circumstances, I am sure that the success of the two Acts in Australasia justify us in making this experiment. There can be no doubt that it will relieve the conscience of the nation of a very great burden. I believe it would do much to regularise industry, and above all, it would emancipate a large class of the extremely poor in our crowded city centres, especially women and children who are the victims of a vicious and oppressive system.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Toulmin.*)

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he hoped the House, as a practical assembly, would look at this question, not from the point of view of sentiment or humanity, but from the point of view of practical results. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of the Bill had stated that arrangements such as those now proposed had been tried in other countries, and had been successful. So far as he knew no such arrangements had ever been tried in any country except Victoria, and he proposed to deal with the results there later on. The hon. Member for the Tottenham Division had stated that no naval officer had his uniform made except under sweating conditions.

*MR. ALDEN: I simply quoted a remark that was made at a conference at the Guildhall. The delegate appointed by the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses said that "not one naval officer in twenty had his uniform made under fair conditions."

SIR F. BANBURY asked whether this Bill was the prelude to a wages board which was to fix wages on trade union conditions, because it seemed to him that that was really the true object of the Bill. It was easy to talk about sweating, but who was to decide what was a sweated wage? The hon. Gentleman opposite considered that all wages which were not trade union wages were sweated wages. Therefore, a Bill of this sort must lead to a wages board which would establish a trade union rate of wages. He was confirmed in his belief by reading the Memorandum which accompanied the Bill. The hon. Member for Bury had alluded to no industry except that of seamstresses and similar workpeople. He was informed that a good many women and children were occupied in these industries under extremely bad conditions, but they should not look at the question from a sentimental point of view if they were going to do any good. This Bill was not confined to these industries. [Mr. ALDEN: Hear, Hear.] Quite so; but if the hon. Gentleman wanted to pass this Bill in the House of Commons it ought to be confined to those industries. He would read the Memorandum—

> "The object of this Bill is to provide for the establishment of wages boards with power to fix the minimum rate of wages to be paid to workers in particular trades. The Bill will apply in the first instance——"

What was meant by the words "in the first instance?" He claimed that he was justified in saying that this was an insidious attempt, under the guise of sentimentality or of sympathy with certain people who were undoubtedly living in unfortunate conditions, to obtain the sympathy of hon. Members in the House whose hearts were a little larger than their heads in order to introduce a socialistic measure. [Cries of "Oh."] Very well, that statement was derided; but he would go on and read a little more of the Memorandum which, he maintained, emphasised what he was endeavouring to prove—

> "The Bill will apply in the first instance only to the traders specified in the Schedule. Power is given to the Home Secretary to say to what other trades the Bill is to extended, and no doubt at first the extension will be made only to what are known as the 'sweated industries.'"

If English words had any meaning, did that passage not mean that the Bill was to be extended to other industries? Therefore, this was an attempt to introduce a mininum rate of wages in all trades. No doubt an extension would be made later on to other industries. And who was to make the extension? Was it to be the House of Commons? Oh! no. It was to be the Home Secretary. They were going back, as he said a few days ago, to a dictatorship. The House of Commons was not to have any voice on these matters. The Home Secretary, or some other Government official, was to arrange what wages were to be paid, and what trades were to be affected. It was quite true that there was a provision in the Bill that the Home Secretary should set up an inquiry as to the "desirability of appointing a Wages Board," but that was to be conducted under Sections 45 and 46 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which, by the way, only referred to explosions and the like in mines. The result would be that the Home Secretary could appoint any person he liked, and on the statement of that one person he could extend this Bill to any industry in the country, or to as many industries as he chose. That seemed to him to be rather a large order, and he could hardly conceive that even this House of Commons would approve of such a principle. Of course it might be said that that was a detail which could be amended in Committee; but in his opinion it was more than a detail, it was the governing part of the Bill. He objected to the Bill for three reasons. First, he objected to the State fixing wages anywhere. Secondly, he did not believe the Bill would carry out its object. Third, he objected to giving power to any Minister, however excellent he might be, to interfere in the trades of the country. That was, to his mind, the very worst thing that could possibly be done. He considered that laws should be made by Parliament and not by Ministers or any other individual. Why was it those people to whom reference had been made, were so badly paid? It was because there was a very great demand amongst all classes of the community for cheap goods. They wanted to buy things cheap and did not take the trouble to inquire into the manner in which the goods were made. He did not believe they were going to alter it. He would only make a slight reference to Tariff Reform. It would be a very small reference, for he rather agreed with the hon. Member for Tottenham that this Bill had very little to do with Tariff Reform. But what would be the result? The purchaser would still want his article cheap; the producer would have to pay an increased rate of wages. What was to prevent the producer sending his material abroad and having it made up there where the provisions of this Bill did not exist. The made-up material being sent back to England under free trade, no duty would be paid upon it; the only thing he would have to pay would be, of course, the freight—which, the articles being packed into a small compass, would be very small. The result would be that in many of the trades it would be impossible for the work people to obtain other work, even at the very low wages now paid. Consequently, the state of things would be worse for them than at present. The hon. Member for Tottenham admitted that there was a possibility of that, but he added that after all the Poor Law and charity would step in to their aid. But was it a good thing to make people depend on the Poor Law or charity? He did not think it was. He was talking to a friend the other day who was rather in favour of the Bill, but thought that it should be limited to certain trades, otherwise ten out of fifty workpeople would be thrown out of employment. He asked his friend on what he based that calculation and he replied that he did not know; it was only his suspicion, his idea. For himself, he believed that many more than ten out of fifty would be thrown out of employment — quite 50 per cent. This was not a matter of sentiment, but a practical thing. A similar law had been in operation in the colony of Victoria, for some years, and the Government of New South Wales, he thought in 1901, appointed Judge Backhouse to inquire into the operation of the law of Compulsory Arbitration in New Zealand, and of the law fixing a minimum wage in Victoria. This was what Judge Backhouse said in his Report to his Government in regard to the law fixing a minimum wage:—

> "There being an excess of labour in most industries in Victoria, one result of the determinations has been that many of the less capable who cannot earn the minimum wage have gone out of employment altogether, or are working in contravention of the law at a lower wage than that fixed."

The promoters of the Victorian legislation recognised that that might occur, and they made a kind of provision to meet it—a provision which was not contained in this Bill :—

> "In the case of the aged or infirm the law contains a provision recognising this difficulty, and permitting them to work with a special licence; but it is not surprising to learn that few men care to apply for such licences. To the man who is merely slow the law shows no mercy. If he cannot earn the minimum wage he must not work at all."

That was not an opinion given at haphazard ; it was a statement given by Judge Backhouse who inquired into the practical effect of the working of the law in Victoria. It would be perfectly easy to evade this Bill if it became law. What was to prevent an employer agreeing with his workman to give him 20/- a week on the understanding that on the Monday morning when he came to the shop to commence work for the new week, the employee should hand the employer 3s. ? Who was to prevent him, and who was going to find out if such an arrangement were made. It was absolutely impossible to find out these things. This Bill emphasised another serious defect of all the legislation passed by the Party opposite. He saw in his place the President of the Board of Trade who was going to appoint a great many more inspectors. They all knew what happened in the South American Republics, where it was found impossible to introduce any reform because the majority of the people were in the employ of the State. In this Parliament, every new Bill that was passed created inspectors and new work for people under the Government, and nothing could be more fatal to the prosperity of a country than such a system. This Bill was no exception to the rule. He thought that he had shown why the Bill was likely to be ineffective if passed. But not only was it likely to be ineffective, but in its present form it would deal a very serious blow at all English enterprise. It was almost impossible to suppose that English capitalists would keep their money in a country where the rate of wages which they had to pay was fixed for them by the State. If such a state of things were to apply all over the world, no one country could set itself up in competition with other countries ; but that was not the case here. A few days ago he had a communication from a Conservative working man, who enclosed a copy of a paragraph in a Lancashire paper of about ten days ago, in which it was stated that he was going to oppose this Bill in the interests of capitalists. At the time he had not seen the Bill, and did not know anything about it, except that two members had spoken to him on the subject, but he had not read the Bill, and he did not know what its provisions were going to be. He only mentioned the matter because he wanted it to be clearly understood that those who opposed the Bill were not acting in the interests of the capitalist. He never employed a labourer in a manufacturing industry in his life, and he had no interest in any manufacturing industry in this country. He opposed the Bill simply because he thought that legislation of this kind would be the ruin of this country.—["No."]—It was all very well for hon. Gentlemen to cry "No," but were they aware of the fact that in the year 1906 £156,000,000 of English capital left this country, and that last year also £80,000,000 of English capital went abroad ? He did not suppose that the hon. Gentleman would suggest that the capitalist was a philanthropist. On the contrary, the capitalist wished to get some return for his money, and if he was hampered by all these State restrictions he would put his money into other countries. Only a few years ago a Radical gentleman who was not a Member of this House, although he had received an honour at the hands of the Government, told him that when he endeavoured to start an enterprise in England it resulted in his being assailed on all sides, instead of, as he would in any other country, being looked upon as a benefactor and received with thanks. Here, however, he was assailed with slanders on all sides in order to prevent his making a decent percentage of profit on his money in England. He therefore said "Never again," and as in Germany he could have 6 or 7 per cent. for his money he would in future conduct his businesses there. Anybody who was acquainted with business knew that it was a fact that money was going out of the country ; it was only human nature that people would not run any risk. Hon. Gentlemen opposite did not run any risk with their money. He remembered that when the water question was to the fore some fifteen or sixteen years ago he said to the President of the Local Government Board, who was then attacking the water companies, that he thought he was a little hard on them, as he supposed the trade unions had money invested in them. The right hon. Gentleman said "Oh no, we do not run any risk." That was it, people did not run any risk, and hon. Members did not run any risk. He hoped, however, that they would acknowledge that he was speaking with all sincerity in what he believed. This was where hon. Members were always mistaken. They did not allow for the ingrained desire in the human frame to keep what he had got. [An HON. MEMBER: But these poor people have nothing to keep."] Well, if they had they would be actuated by exactly the same motive. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time on that day six months.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG (Down, E.), in seconding the Amendment, said that the hon. Baronet who had just sat down supported it for three separate and distinct reasons. He had one reason in favour of it and one only, and that was that he did not believe that as the Bill stood now it was worth the printers' ink which was expended upon it, nor did he think that the high aspirations of those who had brought it in would be fulfilled in any degree at all. He was not wanting in sympathy with those who were working packed in premises such as had been described. Not at all. The reason why he opposed this Bill was that he thought it would save an immense amount of trouble to the House and to the Committees to argue the broad principles of it now and show that it was absolutely useless for the purpose of carrying out the intentions of its promoters. Clause 8 he took it was the section around which this Bill turned. To look at the matter from a purely practical business point of view, supposing that the Board suggested instead of ninepence a dozen for shirts half a crown a dozen. He believed that they were made as low as sixpence a dozen but supposing, for the sake of argument, that the Board said half a crown. The effect of that would be that the large warehousemen engaged in conducting shirt making would immediately proceed to sell the material for making the shirts to those who were called a sweated industry and buy the articles back from them, at a price which would work out at the sixpence or ninepence for making which the workers had hitherto received. He happened to know something about this question, because, although he was not interested in the trade, it formed one of the largest industries in the North of Ireland. It might be asked, where would these poor people get sufficient money to buy the linen in order to take it home and work it into shirts? No law in the land could interfere with an individual going into a place of business and buying so many yards of linen or cotton, and certainly no law prevented anyone in their own house working up that linen or cotton into any shape or form which they thought would be of value to sell in the market. If, as suggested, this class of worker was to be paid at a price above the ordinary level of supply and demand for the particular class of labour, he held that the first arrangement would be that these people, instead of bringing in their shirts and finished articles at the end of the week and being paid for them simply on the basis of so many shirts, would buy so many yards of material, and the traders would buy back the finished articles at the market price. By this means the rate received for making the shirts would remain the same and the Bill would be defeated. If the hon. Gentleman could get round that argument some of its opponents might look upon the Bill with a little more favour than they did now. The hon. Baronet had also suggested that the raw material might possibly go to Germany and come back as manufactured goods, and that argument was a very strong one, but it was only necessary to look at the Bill to see how utterly fantastic it was, and although it aimed at a good object, it would not have any effect. To return to the point as to where these poor people would get sufficient capital to buy the material out of which to manufacture the articles, he would point out that these so-called sweated industries were quite supplementary to the work of other members of a family. In a family the father and mother might work in some large spinning factory, and there might also be a daughter and son old enough to do that. After a while the growing family necessitated the wife remaining at home to look after the younger children, and in order to supplement the meagre resources of the family she took in a little work of the sweated class, and it was quite possible that those members of the family engaged in other industries would be able to supply the money to buy the raw material for the daughter or wife to make up into shirts. The small boy who sold papers in the street did not require a great deal of capital. The lad put down a certain amount of money, got a certain number of newspapers, and went out and sold them in the ordinary course of trade. He then paid for what he had had and got some more. The same would hold good in the case of these articles, no matter what restrictions were imposed and no matter what attempts were made to put an artificial value on men's or women's work. Any such effort could always be got round by some such system as he had indicated to the House. He could not understand the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean being on this Bill unless he was prepared to give the House a complete explanation as to how the artificiality which underlay the measure was to be done away with. Only when that explanation had been given would it be possible to look upon the Bill with any favour.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir Frederick Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. VILLIERS (Brighton) said it was very curious to hear the hon. Member for the City of London complaining about wages boards and speaking against this Bill. He would remind the hon. Member that as a director of a railway company he had himself accepted the principle of a wages board under the arrangement which was brought about by the President of the Board of Trade only the other day. His only excuse for intervening in this debate was that six months ago when in Australia he made a study of the wages board system in Victoria, a system upon which this Bill was almost entirely founded. He had an opportunity of discussing the question there with Sir A. Pencock, who was the father of the system which had worked admirably. So well in fact had it worked that the other States were thinking of giving up arbitration courts in favour of wages boards. In these days when there was so much wild talk of Socialism and anti-Socialism, of theoretical Socialism and practical Socialism, it was useful to see how these measures worked at in practice. Here Socialism was only seen in the pattern. Out in Australia it was seen in the piece. Here it was only seen in the shape of a red tie or two. There it was a garment worn and enjoyed by the multitude. He was not afraid of Socialism so long as it was sane Socialism and so long as it did not substitute one kind of class legislation for another. But this was no class legislation. Out of forty-nine boards established in various parts of Victoria at least a quarter were asked for by the employers themselves. The better kind of employers courted these boards, because they were thus secured against the unfair competition of less scrupulous employers, while the employed were saved from too low wages, too long hours, and excessive child labour. He had no need to point out that these last two features of the system would materially ease the unemployed problem. These boards acted more on voluntary than on coercive lines, and their decisions were frequently compromises. Few if any strikes had occurred where a "wage determination" was enforced. These boards had one decided advantage over arbitration courts inasmuch as they did away with the cost of legal proceedings, and even in that House where the learned and legal profession was so well represented—was it one in six?—he thought that hon. Members, though lawyers, would agree that it was better that these disputes should be settled by men who knew and who understood the ramifications of their own trade rather than by a Judge and counsel who must of necessity in this be jacks of all trades and masters of none. England and Australia differed in age. Australia being younger, and without our large vested interests and traditions, could afford better than ourselves to make experiments, and should we not profit, therefore, from such experiments when we could? This was a case where we could successfully do so, and he hoped the Bill would be largely supported.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow) said that those who sat on the Labour Benches earnestly desired that this Bill should meet with more generous treatment than had some private Members' Bills. He did not propose to follow the argument of the hon. Gentlemen who moved and seconded its rejection. The hon. Baronet who represented the City of London had described this as a socialistic Bill. "Socialism" was a word which was frequently heard in the House, and some Members were very glad to hear it, although they knew that some who used the word had no conception of its meaning. If this was a socialistic Bill there were many Acts which had been passed by this House which were also socialistic. The Workman's Compensation Act, the Factory Acts, the Truck Acts were socialistic Acts. All the Acts of Parliament which were passed to restrict the rapacity of capital and for the purpose of protecting the disinherited were, according to the hon. Member for the City of London, socialistic Acts of Parliament. But while they were prepared to recognise that this was a most beneficial Bill, which would if it became an Act do something to mitigate the evils of sweating, they did not regard it as a final solution of that problem. The Bill endeavoured to meet the question of "out-work" or "home-work." There was no greater evil to be found to-day in the working class districts, especially in the East of London, than the evil that arose from home-work. If the hon. Member for the City of London would go down to Bethnal Green at midnight, any time, and go into the garrets in the shoemaking centres of that district he would find the father, mother, and perhaps two or three of the children, all working away at the component parts of a cheap boot, all eager to get it done ready to take it early to the sweaters' shop and get what they could for their labour. That was a condition of things that was a scandal to any civilised state. He came up every morning from the East End, where he lived, and he found numbers of young women worn out and with gaunt features, with colossal parcels of clothing. They had sat up all night to get this clothing finished in order to get it into the City, and when they got it there, it would hardly sound credible, they were often kept three or four hours before they received what was due to them. The hon. Member for the City of London had said that there was a general desire to buy cheap articles, and that that must mean low wages. But the better the wages became the greater would become the desire to buy better goods. If this Bill was successful it would do away largely with the middleman who did nothing but give out the work and sell it when finished. The quotation made by the hon. Member for the City of London had no relevance whatever to this Bill. It was an argument against the compulsory arbitration law as it prevailed in Australia. This Bill was not a compulsory arbitration Bill. Its main objects were to do away with the sweating in special industries—in the twine work, in the boot and shoe, clothing, and match making industries—which existed to-day in so many parts of the country. It had for its object the establishment, if possible, of wages boards in connection with this class of home work, under which the broker or manufacturer would be compelled to pay a minimum standard of wages. By so doing the manufacturer would make no sacrifice, because the workers thereby would be given an opportunity of purchasing to a greater extent in the market than they had at the present time. He hoped the Bill would be read a second time, and that it would be discussed in a non-party spirit. As the hon. Member opposite had said, we wanted to imitate the Colonies as far as possible when experiments of this description had been tried there and found successful. Notwithstanding the complex nature of our industries and their age as compared with those of the colonies, when we found an industrial Act working to the satisfaction of the employers and the employed alike in our Colonies it was our duty to imitate them in the matter.

*MR. MOND (Chester) said he would not have intervened in the debate but for the fact that he thought there had been some misconception with regard to this question. All who had been successful manufacturers had early grasped the fact that profits were not to be made out of low wages. There was no greater fallacy than to suppose that low wages meant low cost of production. He had been in a position recently to compare the cost of production of a certain product in England, France, Belgium, Germany and Russia, and the curious result of his investigation was that England with an eight-hour day and higher wages had a lower labour cost per ton of product than any continental country, and that Russia with the lowest wages and the longest hours had the highest labour cost. That he thought would dispose of the argument of the hon. Member for the City of London that if we passed this Bill the manufacture of these goods in the trades in which the sweating occurred would be transported to foreign countries, and the goods imported here. If that argument was true how were the textile industries in Lancashire carried on? Why were they not transferred to Germany where there were lower wages and the goods brought into this country in the manufactured form? If Lancashire was compared with Japan it would be found that in Japan it took ten workmen to do the work which one did in Lancashire, and that although the wages in Japan for those ten workmen was less than the wages of the one in Lancashire the cost of production was higher. Once let them grasp the principle that low paid and inefficient labour was most expensive and not employed by people who understood their business and the fear with regard to this Bill disappeared. All those who had studied the question for more than ten days found this curious anomaly, that manufacturers engaged in the same industry paid much higher wages on one side of the street than on the other. The hon. Baronet who represented the City of London always spoke as if the only capitalists in the United Kingdom were himself and his friends. He believed the hon. Baronet had at one time some connection with the city which was now severed, but he believed if he went and made inquiries he would find English investors investing their capital not, as he had said, in other countries, but in this country. It was an absolute libel on the English investor, the English manufacturer, and the English workman to say that England was not as good a country for investments as any in the world. Only quite recently he heard of a number of German manufacturers who were considering the advisability of setting up manufactories in this country. The other day, the manager of one of the largest industrial concerns in Germany came over to this country to make arrangements for erecting a works in England, because, he said, that the labour laws and restrictions in Germany were so severe that he could more advantageously carry on his business in this country. He hoped, therefore, that there would be no further opposition on that ground. It would be difficult to carry out the provisions of this Bill, he quite admitted. The one criticism that he desired to make upon it was that the penalty clauses were not sufficient and he hoped that they would be strengthened. It appeared to him that in these matters the Government of the day were always afraid of making the penalties sufficiently heavy. By all means let them try to remedy this admitted evil. Whatever happened, the condition of these unhappy workers could not be worse than it was to-day, and if the Bill was found to be a failure and had to be repealed they would not be the worse off for it. They ought to make every attempt to get rid of what everybody felt and all must consider the moral degradation of sweating. Everybody had recognised the futility of private effort. Nobody buying their clothes in the West End could by any possibility ascertain where those clothes had been made. Some of the most expensive clothing was made under these frightful conditions, and if by any legislation they could be put an end to, that legislation ought to be passed. If once the idea was created that there was a desire to assist these people; if once they could be persuaded that there was a place to which they could go and get their case looked into, something would have been accomplished. Wages boards already existed in every great organised trade, and by this Bill the House was only giving to the unorganised workers the same advantage that the organised trades enjoyed. He quite agreed with the hon. Baronet that

State interference in trade matters was not desirable; he did not like it himself; but he thought they would do well by passing this Bill. They might take to their hearts the knowledge that they had tried to do the right thing and that if they failed they had failed with good motives.

*MR. HILLS (Durham) said he did not think this Bill would fail, but if it did they would have done a great deal and its very failure might serve to put them on the track of the right solution of the problem. He did not think that the hon. Gentlemen who had moved and seconded the rejection of the Bill could have quite appreciated the magnitude of the evil. The two speeches introducing the Bill were most moderate, and all who had read the evidence given before the Committee on Home Work knew that the case could have been made a great deal stronger. There were hundreds of cases quoted of ridiculously low rates of pay, even down to ½d. an hour, and that revealed a state of things which the House at any rate should make some effort to alter. The one thing that struck him was that in all the talk of those who were against the Bill no sort of remedy had been suggested. It was twenty years since the Royal Commission which sat upon this question reported, yet not a single effort had up to the present been made to solve the question. That position had continued long enough, the evil was known, all the facts admitted, and it was for the House to find a remedy. All the evils of sweating, low wages, long hours, insanitary dwellings, were forms of the great problem of poverty. The only way in which this could be altered was by raising wages. They had to be raised artificially, and the only way of raising them artificially was by State interference. The question was what it would cost. He did not think the first cost would be very great, because he agreed with the hon. Member for Chester that in the end the well-paid workman was most economical. Therefore they would not see a great loss on that head. If the Report of the Royal Commission was consulted it would be found that all the people who were employed in the sweated trades were people who did not depend upon that trade alone for their livelihood. Sweating wages were wages which would not support any sort of existence, and the people who earned the sweating wages were people who had to be supported somehow besides by their toil, and the State had to pay in some form or other. Even if it cost the community money it would pay the community over and over again, because they had to regard the race, and if the race by this low standard of living deteriorated then it was bad for the community at large, and the only way to alter that was to raise wages. He quite agreed with the hon. Baronet that it was a small Bill to be applied at present only to a few trades and only to the rate of wages. At the same time, once let an advance be made on that road and he hoped they would go further and do something that really raised the standard of living in this country

*MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) said that for many years he had been connected with women's trade unions in London, and the one danger he saw in this Bill, a danger which he thought might be avoided, was the fear that something might be done to discourage trade unions. The moment the law interfered to establish a rate of wages there was a tendency to usurp the work of trade unionism and discourage its growth. The fact which had to be looked fairly in the face was that this Bill did to some extent interfere with the principle of trade unionism, which was not only helpful to the workers but to the community at large. That was the only doubt in his mind when he rose to support this Bill, which he should certainly vote for, but he hoped trade unionists would take note of what was going on and take care that the Bill was not carried far enough to do them serious damage. Trade unions, he believed, were helpful in fixing reasonable wages and were steadily raising the position of the worker. When trade unions were outside the law there were continual breaches of the law, but directly they were brought within the scope of the law the action of the trade unions became immensely beneficial and had resulted in raising the position of the whole of the workers in the country. The main point in the Bill that would guard against that danger was, first of all, that very few trades were at present included in the schedule, and only those trades as far as he could see where the condition of the workers was so low that they practically could not do without it. He hoped the time might come when in every trade the possibility of combination would have come in and when those who combined would feel that their wages and conditions of labour were so absolutely secured by combination that they could do without such legislation as this. He strongly hoped the Bill would go through. He thought there were the strongest possible reasons for supporting it.

MR. GWYNN (Galway) said he took part in the debate, not as an expert, but to put an *à priori* view of a different kind from that which had been put already. He would like to challenge the whole conception that underlay the speech of the hon. Member for the City of London, who talked to the House of its being a practical assembly that had no concern with humanity. At the back of his mind, in listening to that debate, was the echo of the same question as it presented itself in Ireland. The question came back to them in a wholly different shape. Law was always treated by gentlemen of the type of the hon. Baronet as a kind of fixed thing which must not be lightly interfered with. His point of view was that law was an expression of public opinion—of the moral sense of the community—and there the seconder had struck a note at the beginning which ought to sound through the whole discussion. What they had at present was a social state which was repugnant to the moral sense of any decent man. Law at the present time permitted that state of things, even in a certain sense it was willing to enforce it, as it had done in Ireland over and over again. He held that their business was to alter law. He did not know that he was a Socialist, but he knew that he was profoundly in favour of State regulation. What was the law for in the last analysis? It was to regulate the competition of the strong and the weak. People found on the whole that it was necessary to prevent the weak from being crushed out. The struggle was settled as regarded the physical world. There was no doubt that the weak had to be protected against the strong. But how about the economically weak? How about the half-paid? That was the question they were really discussing. It appeared to him that the existence of the half-paid was a scourge and a danger to the whole community. He came from a country where wages were low and where as a consequence there was very little industrial employment. Of all miserably paid employment in Ireland the most miserable was the shirt industry. Wherever one went one could see that this thing was spreading like a canker, eating into the physique and heart of the country. One could tell the piece-workers by the look of them if one ever saw them outside the doors of their houses. He fully admitted that there would be difficulty in regulating these things, but it appeared to him that the action of the Bill would not be to supersede but to assist trade unionism. Trade unionists would expose and put an end to such a fraud as the case quoted by the hon. Baronet of an employer contracting to pay his men £1 on the understanding that they gave back 3s. on Monday morning. As for the piece-work at home, it was possible that that might be met by trade unions, but he fully recognised the force of the argument that there would be a danger of a certain amount of cheap labour from abroad coming in. The hon. Member for Chester had declared in effect that this underpaid work was work that should not be done or, if it was, should be done by machinery. He had heard recently of a case in Ireland where certain cheaply paid work was done by hand at 9d. a dozen. The merchants in Belfast were approached by representatives of the Japanese industry who proposed to do the same thing at 3½d. The result was, he thought, to put an end to that industry. The community would have in cases like that to decide whether it would do as the Colonies had done and exclude that cheap labour, or undercut the cheap labour by doing it still more cheaply by machinery. After all, they were discussing a question in the abstract, but he sincerely hoped the Bill would go to Committee. They in Ireland had heard all those arguments before against State regulation. They had been told before that if they introduced it, it would supersede industrial competition, and in every case those prophecies had been falsified. He believed they would find here also that by State regulation they would assist the natural combination of individuals in the trade unions and that ultimately they would waken the moral sense of the community.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) sincerely hoped that the Bill would be passed unanimously. It was one of great importance, and the speeches of the proposer and seconder were very moderate. They had not expressed any exaggeration whatever, and they could have done much more to make the House feel the awfulness of this great question. The seconder had said that philanthropy was no remedy for this evil. However keenly they might feel in regard to the question, it was perfectly clear that by parting with their money or by paying money towards benefaction they could not get over this great evil, and it was also perfectly true that there were risks of promoting evils by passing this measure. At the same time, having given some consideration to the matter, he was of opinion that it was the duty of the House to pass legislation of this character. His only suggestion with regard to the Bill was that it should come into force on 1st July, instead of 18th January next. Reference had been made to trade unions. He had had a considerable amount of experience in dealing with and arranging terms with those bodies, and he believed as a whole trade unions had been of great benefit to the country and the community generally, and especially in the North of England, where they were stronger than in any other part of the country. His complaint was that they were somewhat illogical—he was not referring entirely to the subject of tariff reform—in regard to certain matters. They were very anxious on all occasions to take advantage of technical education. Yet a young man went to a technical school and received education which was to enable him to rise from the bottom to the top of the ladder, and when he left the technical school in many instances he went and performed labour in which the conditions were such that he could only do a certain amount of work and receive a certain amount of pay. When this Bill passed into law, there would, he understood, be a board composed of employers and employed with an independent chairman. If the Bill were carried further it was possible that there might be some sort of compulsory arbitration. That was a principle which was not believed in by a great many trade unions in this country. At the same time there were many who believed in it, because it had been in satisfactory operation in some other countries. It was not for reasons of sentimentality that he supported the Bill. It was because he knew that the evils with which it would deal existed, and nobody had been able to think of any other means by which they could be overcome. It was all very well for the hon. Baronet to adopt a *non possumus* attitude. The world was certainly hard. It was absolutely essential that some means should be found of doing away with these evils. This measure contained no new principle, because it was contained in the Factory Acts passed by both Parties during the last thirty years. Why on earth should they allow people to go on working at starvation wages? It had been said that if the Bill were passed this particular kind of work could not continue. In view of the conditions under which these people existed it would be far better that they should not exist at all than continue to live as at present. One hon. Member had stated that he would be a tariff reformer if he thought it would benefit the country. He himself would be a Socialist if he thought it would do away with these evils. It was quite certain that the evils complained of did exist, and that the weak were overcome by the strong and had to be protected. For those reasons he hoped the Bill would pass its Second Reading without opposition, and if it had the effect of fulfilling the hopes of its promoters it would be one of the best measures ever placed on the Statute Book.

*MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme) said he was sorry to have to strike a jarring note in this debate, but he wanted the House to hear a few of the dangers underlying this Bill, although the measure itself might be primarily intended to confer benefits. In the first place the only supporter of the Bill who was really to be congratulated was the hon. Member for Durham City, because he thought the passage of the measure would strengthen the hands of tariff reformers throughout the country. It would give them a weapon which they could not fail to use. What defence could any free-trader offer? They said they wanted to prevent people working for sweated wages in this country, and at the same time they were allowing the free import of competing goods made by sweated labour abroad. These wages boards which were to be formed would recommend with semi-official force that their particular industry should be protected from the competition of the German or Belgian sweated goods. The next objection that he wished to urge was this. Any fixing of wages, any increase of wages in these sweated trades must tend to reduce the number of people employed in those trades, and the amount of that industry which was carried on here. He did not say that it would stop people at present working in any particular trade, but it would have the effect of preventing new workers coming into that industry, and it would reduce also the amount of that industry carried on in future. It would tend inevitably to drive labour that was at present sweated in one trade into a wider circle outside—into other trades which were at present not sweated. Supposing one dropped a drop of water into the middle of a blot of ink. The blot of ink looked less black, but it spread over a wider area. By the passage of this measure they would inevitably drive the sweated conditions into a larger circle of trades which were not at present so severely affected by existing conditions. He thought the hon. Member for Bury really put his finger on the spot when he said that the whole question of sweated industry was in reality a branch of the unemployed problem. So long as they had a floating margin of unemployment all round the labour market they would be bound to have the wages of labour tending towards subsistence level. The non-sweated trades were also affected, the workers in the non-sweated trades were under-cut and their conditions tended always to become as bad as those in sweated trades. Surely the way to deal with this question was not to tinker with it and deal spasmodically with isolated sweated trades, but to go to the root of unemployment and deal with the whole question of present industrial conditions—fundamentally—by altering those conditions so that sweating could not exist. He believed there was a line of policy which would definitely alter the present industrial conditions, which would make it the usual thing for one employer to compete with other employers for labour and stop workmen competing with each other for the chance of earning a miserable pittance, driven by the alternative of starvation. They wanted to alter the balance. The fact that two men were after one job meant that they would take a subsistence wage to do the job. Therefore he would try to alter the balance, and if they had two employers after one workman that condition of things would be altered. There was a time in this country when such a condition of things did exist, when employers were competing for labour and when a measure of this kind was passed, but in the interests of employers. All through the fourteenth century, after the Black Death, there was less labour than employers wanted, and numbers of employers were actually fined for giving labourers more than the standard rate of wages fixed by law. It was absurd that the man who should be thankful was the man who did the work and not the man for whom it was done. Was that not a reversal of the ordinary state of affairs? He would endeavour to show how this state of affairs might be remedied, and he invited the House to consider for a moment the present rating system. At present every improvement was heavily taxed. There was a 50 per cent. tax on every new building and upon every extension of industry. There was also special remission of taxes and rates in favour of those owners who did not use their land and raw materials properly. Every owner of house property who let his houses stand empty had his rates remitted; every owner of ripening land who allowed the process of ripening to go on and did not allow the community to use his land had his rates remitted. When Lord Penrhyn closed down his slate quarries and people could not get slates so cheaply as they otherwise would have done, he got his rates remitted. They actually had at present a system of rating which taxed everybody who tried to improve the country and directly benefited everybody who prevented the country's development. The work that they should increase so as to do away with the margin of unemployment was productive work. What was productive work? It was the application of labour to land; the working up of raw materials into shapes calculated to gratify human wants; such as taking clay and working it into cups, or taking coal and turning it into gas, or taking land and turning it into bread and butter. In every case productive workers were taking raw material, or land which might be used for factories or buildings, and turning these raw materials into something that was useful. Now surely the way to increase productive work was to make this application of labour to the raw materials easier than it was at present. As our present rating system distinctly penalised any sort of productive work and distinctly benefited owners of raw material who did not allow their raw materials to be used, the surest way of getting out of this difficulty of unemployment was so to alter the rating system that the man who withheld his raw material should not be omitted from the universal net of the tax collector, and the person who did improve his property should be saved from the penalising tax of the rates which were at present imposed on him. He was convinced that the idea underlying this Bill for stopping sweated conditions in two or three selected trades was not one by which they could alter the existence of industrial slavery under which they existed to-day. The plan was hopelessly futile. They had to alter the fundamental conditions of employment and remove artificial obstacles put in the way of labour, preventing its application to land and raw materials. It was only by these methods they could hope to solve the problem.

Mr. GOULDING (Worcester) very much regretted that the promoters had not allowed the name of a Conservative Member to appear on the back of the Bill. It was no party question, but he supposed that, with the zeal of converts, the promoters desired to appropriate the credit. He reminded the House that the agitation against sweated labour originated with Lord Dunraven. Nothing had more encouraged sweating than the free importation of alien paupers. One had only to quote from the evidence given before the Royal Commission to show that the character of whole districts had been changed by this free importation of alien labour. When the late Government were endeavouring to deal with the pauper alien question every Gentleman now on the Treasury Bench did his best to obstruct the measure. They had learnt their lesson since. This Bill involved the protection of British labour, and he supported it as the forerunner of measures to protect British industry from the competition of sweated alien produce coming from abroad. Sweating was a national disgrace and a source of inefficiency. If a trade could only be kept going by such means it were better abandoned altogether. A living wage and reasonable hours were essential to good work. He held that the labourer was worthy of his hire, and good work could not be produced under the conditions prevailing in sweated industries. Continuous work took the whole heart out of the workers, who performed their allotted task without any interest in it and without a particle of hope of any improvement in their lot. Those poor wretches worked on and became mere machines carrying on the drudgery of their daily lives. Those unfortunate workers, toiling as no persons in our prisons toiled, had no idea of patriotism, and were consequently liable to sympathise with the class hatred which was so sedulously propagated by socialistic people. Unfortunately, in those trades women formed the majority of the workers, and they were often thus employed because their husbands were only partially employed or else receiving such a miserable wage that the women had to go out to work in order to keep the household together. They had to work such long hours that, as a natural consequence, these unfortunate women had to neglect their natural duties both as mothers and housewives. He did not believe, however, that the employers in those industries were any worse men than other individuals. There were good and bad amongst them just as there were good and bad in this House. There were many employers who desired to give good wages, but they were compelled by cut-throat competition and unscrupulous foreign rivals to reduce the wages of their work-people. Those who had studied the Blue-book dealing with home work knew that there were many generous employers of labour who had been bound to reduce the wages they were paying to their work-people because their competitors in that particular industry were paying between 20 and 60 per cent. less wages. He did not need to narrate the cases which called for immediate action beyond mentioning that 10½d. per dozen was paid for making corsets, shirts were being made at 11d. per dozen, and trousers 1¾d. to 3d. per pair, including pressing, but exclusive of cutting. That was the way our export trade was being built up in this country. What did this Bill propose? To try and find a solution of this evil in those special trades where the workpeople had no means of organisation and were helpless to provide for themselves. He ventured to say that the wages board was by far the most efficient and practical method of procedure, because it was cheaper, more mobile, and created for the purpose, and consisted of the representatives of both the masters and the men. When any of the technical difficulties of a trade arose those sitting on the wages board would be cognisant of all the facts, and would apply their minds to discovering a remedy. Every individual member of a board so constituted would be interested in its success, and in arriving at decisions they would not be likely to injure, much less destroy, the industry upon which they all depended for their livelihood, and they would be quite competent to fix the minimum wage which an employer could afford to pay. The chairman of the board should not be a barrister, but a business man selected for his knowledge and ability as a business man. In all the cases where the Act had been in force in Victoria, the chairman had been a business man, and he had been able to bring his influence to bear on both sides to secure their adhesion to the judgments given. Out of 230 decisions, 185 were unanimous by reason of the feeling on both sides of the competence of the board, and in regard to the remainder none were appealed. The chairman would be chosen from the specific trade in dispute and he would be chosen *ad hoc* to deal with a specific question. He considered that this Bill was a great step towards tariff reform, and that it would protect British workmen. When we were able to drive out those individuals who were only in this country because they did work cheaply and nastily, we should be able to secure fair employment for our own people. This measure was only the beginning of what the British workers were going to have, for it would not be enough merely to drive out sweaters that they might erect their plant in Germany and elsewhere, and then dump down their sweated goods here. He thought the Bill should be strictly limited to those trades where sweating existed. The very pertinent suggestions made by the hon. Member for East Down should be considered. He was perfectly certain that on the Committee there would be plenty of men who would be able to foresee the evasions which the hon. Member predicted, and to find means to prevent them. He heartily supported the measure, believing that it would be a great step towards stopping the curse of sweating and in securing fair play for trade in this country.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) said the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London entirely misunderstood the economic principle which lay at the root of the Bill. The hon. Baronet remarked that all classes wanted cheap goods. That was perfectly true, and he would add that the demand for cheapness—that was the demand for plentifulness, for that was what cheapness meant—was an entirely legitimate demand. The answer to the hon. Baronet's argument was that the best way to get cheapness was not by sweated labour, but to secure plentifulness by adopting the best economic methods industrial science had evolved. If he might illustrate that obvious remark, he would do so by reference to a single trade, namely, the match-box trade.

Match-boxes were made in two ways—by machinery, worked by human labour, ill or well paid; and by human machines working for a pitiful wage in the performance of a task which really was not human at all, but a mechanical task that ought to be relegated to the sphere of machinery. What did they do by allowing women and children in the East End of London to continue working for pitiful wages in making match-boxes? They enabled some small capitalist—a bad, and he hoped, a dying representative of his class—to take these human machines and trespass upon the disadvantages which were theirs—the disadvantage, perhaps the disability rather, of a woman who had been deprived of her husband, or of orphans who had no longer a father. The small capitalist need not establish a factory. He could compel the home-worker to supply him with factory room, lighting, fetching and carrying, and thus to enable him to manufacture under conditions of spurious and illegitimate cheapness, conditions which this Bill would do away with. What would happen if that manufacturer were compelled to discontinue the use of that human machinery? He had not capital at his command to buy machines to make match-boxes; he would have to go out of the trade entirely, and the result would be that we should gain not less cheapness, but more cheapness. The price of match-boxes would not go up; it might even fall as the result. He passed to another point — the contention of the hon. Baronet that the poor woman would be driven out of the trade, and that the orphan would no longer be able to work. The picture flashed across his own mind of the last room he visited where match-boxes were made under these conditions. There was the consumptive father, the mother, and three or four children crawling about the floor, one of them a feeble-minded child. The hon. Baronet—and it was to his credit—had pity for these women and children; he conceived them deprived of work, and no longer able to support the consumptive father and themselves. When he visited them, that family was half supported out of the poor rate already. That amounted to a subsidy He put it to the hon. Baronet that it would be well for the community, and well for those individuals, if they were driven out of the trade, and if they were dependent on the poor rate wholly and not partially. But do not let them exaggerate the question of driving out of employment the units in these industries. As a matter of fact, these people were piece-workers as a rule. Home work was usually piece-work, and that point had to be taken into consideration when they were dealing with the number of units who were likely to be driven out of employment by the passing of such a measure. The only case where the unit would be driven out of the industry was such a case as he had pictured. But what would be the economic result of a higher rate for piece-work in most cases? It would be that the slow or inefficient, the old or infirm worker, instead of being driven out, would get a little more for the work he did. It might take him a little longer than the efficient worker, but at least he would not be driven out. He took it that that answer largely met the quite proper objection the hon. Baronet had raised, as to persons being driven out of industry. What he had stated had been the experience in connection with the Victoria wages boards. The inspector who last reported on the subject, so far as he knew, stated that admirable results had been secured without injury to any old or infirm worker, and *a priori* he thought there was every reason to believe that that statement was true, for the reasons he had already put before the House. He thought that this Bill by creating increased efficiency would not, as the hon. Member for Worcester feared, increase the intensity of foreign competition. If the abolition of sweating would make industry more and not less efficient, how could foreign competition be increased?

MR. GOULDING: I said there would be better employment here and better work turned out.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY said it seemed to him that the hon. Member feared that sweated goods would come in from abroad.

MR. GOULDING: Sweated goods come in now.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY said that if they rendered industry more efficient by this Bill sweated goods would not be so likely to come in. The best employers welcomed this legislation. He called the attention of the House to a striking instance which recently occurred. He would not mention the name of the firm concerned. A dispute occurred, and the firm agreed to arbitration. The arbitration was held with Mr. Askwith of the Board of Trade in the chair. The reductions of wages complained of were very serious, being more than 50 per cent. Was that done willingly by the firm? No, it was not. The firm pointed out to the arbitration board that this action had been forced upon them by the action of another firm. They said that if the other firm would pay an equal amount, they would not make the reduction, because they would be relieved from unfair competition. In other words, the firm that appeared before the Board of Trade arbitrator appealed for the principle which this Bill sought to set up. The hon. Baronet had said that this Bill was introduced by people whose hearts were larger than their heads. He mistook the principle of the Bill. It was possible for a man with a big heart and a big head also to vote for the Bill. In view of the considerations he had put before the House, and which others had advanced, he would appeal to the hon. Baronet to withdraw his oppostion and allow the Bill to go forward as an unopposed measure.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.) said he would not have risen if it had not been stated in evidence that the city which he had the honour to represent contained as large a proportion of home workers as any city in the country. There were some 25,000 operatives connected with the lace trade in Nottingham, and 8,000 of them were stated by Miss Squires to be home workers. It had been suggested that there was some danger of tariff reform by the passing of the Bill, and they had had an excellent address on what might be called root principles. He remembered, however, the difficulty he had in getting into the House—and he could not forget he would have as great or even a greater difficulty in getting in next time. Therefore, he did not want to wait until the generation after the next to put into operation the principles of this Bill, which would so vitally affect the poorest in our towns and cities. Speaking of tariff reform and as one belonging to the Labour Party, he could say that while they agreed that as a nation we could not have accumulated the aggregate amount of wealth under any protective system which we had done under free trade, yet they were endeavouring to secure—and it was the principle of this Bill—a more adequate distribution of the wealth produced by the workers of the country. He was convinced by his own inquiries in Nottingham that employers, home workers, and trade unionists alike were anxious for something to be done, and because he believed something practical would be done by the Bill, he wished to see it pass without a division. As to the practical side of the matter, he pointed out that some two or three years ago there was a dispute in Nottingham affecting 6,000 lace operatives, when a board very similar to the one suggested in the Bill was formed, and Mr. Askwith was sent down by the Board of Trade as umpire. Many witnesses went before that board and many intricate questions were considered, yet the result was so satisfactory that work had gone on harmoniously as between employers and employees, and until the American crisis the Nottingham lace trade had never been so good. He also pointed out that the employers in Nottingham had themselves attempted to remedy the evils of home work, and a committee was formed for the purpose. Good employers, however, had told him that the difficulty was that the bad employers would not agree to a settled price. It was in the interests, therefore, not only of the employees, but of the good employers that this Bill should be passed.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said the hon. Member for North Paddington had stated that everybody wanted cheapness. That was all very well. They wanted to buy cheap, but to sell their labour dear. They could not have it both ways. If they would have cheap manufactured goods, they must have cheap labour. What they did at present was to import cheap alien labour and cheap foreign goods. He was in favour of the Bill, and he would like to see everybody in the country getting good wages, but he could not see how it could possibly be done under present conditions. A suit of shoddy clothes which could be got for a sovereign was produced by sweated labour. The material was composed of all sorts of rubbish. It was put into what were called "devils" in the north of England, and eventually it was turned into cloth. That was all done by sweated labour, and when it came to be made up the prices paid were even worse because there was a continual influx of foreign Jew labour. Although it was very cheap at a sovereign and undoubtedly it was the result of sweated labour—poor people who bought it could not afford any better—it was shabby in six months and a shower of rain nearly destroyed it. That was an example of cheap goods made by sweated labour. If it was desirable to keep alien people from coming into this country and taking away work from our own poor people by working for starvation wages, it was also desirable to keep very cheap goods from coming into the country without paying any share of our taxation. He appealed to the Labour Members to give this matter their most serious consideration. He did not agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London. [LABOUR cries of "Oh, yes, you do."] He was not what was called a Socialist Parliamentarian; he would go in for a minimum wage, but they could not get a minimum wage unless there was plenty of work. And there would never be plenty of work in this country until the work of our own people was protected from the unfair competition of cheap manufactures from abroad. He quite agreed that our own poor people should be protected from being unfairly treated by their employers, but he maintained that they would remain absolutely helpless unless foreign labour and the products of foreign labour were excluded from the country.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's Hanover Square) said he rejoiced to notice the sympathy of the House as a whole with the objects which the promoters of this measure had in view. It would be, he believed, correct to say that the vast majority of the House entertained the opinion that strikes in the main led to national distress. But he trusted that the promoters of the Bill would consent to make it a truly experimental measure. He wished to make a success of the experiment and not a failure; hence the criticisms which he desired to put very briefly at the outset of his observations. Three trades were mentioned in the schedule to the Bill, and he thought that this was too large an experimental area to begin with. It would be better to select some more manageable trade in which organisation could be more easily fostered, and to try the experiment in that first. He threw out that suggestion in the interest of the Bill itself, because there was nothing more important in legislation of this kind than that the House should make an experiment under conditions which would give a good chance of remedying the evils. In the next place, it would be more in consonance with the experimental principle of the Bill if the clause with regard to the Home Secretary were modified or left out. He was sure his right hon. friend would not imagine that he was making any reflection upon himself or on the great department over which he presided. But they always felt that strong pressure was exercised on Ministers from time to time which it was not always easy for them to resist, and he feared that possibly premature attempts might be made on his right hon. friend to extend the area of the Bill before the experiment in the first instance had been made so as to become fully effective. Future legislation in this matter should be left to the House. He did not think there would be any difficulty in showing that there would be even greater unanimity in the House in the future than at present if it could be stated that the experiment had been tried in the first place on a small scale and had been thoroughly successful. The hon. Member for the City of London objected to the Bill on the ground that the State would be fixing wages. He did not think that that was the case, and he believed that his hon. friend had made a mistake in interpreting the fundamental provision of it.

The success of this experiment had been proved in Nottingham exactly according to the procedure provided by the Bill. Workmen and employers met together to discuss the question of wages, and they were the people assuredly who knew what, to use the language of the railway world, "the traffic" would bear. They were not likely to do anything that would kill the industry with which they were connected. They agreed to take a certain course, and if they did not agree they appointed an umpire. He hoped their efforts would be as successful as his hon. friend could desire.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would point out that the wages board was to consist of an equal number of employers and employed. But in the event of a difference of opinion, the question would be settled by the chairman, and he was appointed by the State. He was right, therefore, in saying that the State would fix the minimum wage.

MR. LYTTELTON said that his hon. friend was perfectly accurate in what he said; but he did not think his hon. friend drew the right conclusion from the premises. The businesslike feature of the Bill was the bringing of the employers and the employed face to face. From long experience he had seen happy results, in almost every sphere, of bringing people round a table and taking a businesslike view as business men of the matter in dispute. He could imagine nothing more likely to lead to good feeling, or nothing which removed so many misapprehensions. For his own part, with all the conviction and energy possible, he believed as soon as employers were brought face to face with these poor women, and saw the misery to which they had been reduced, the best human understanding and sympathy would be promoted. In his opinion it would give to human nature the opportunity of asserting its best self. The board which they proposed would be a board competent to deal with the matter; it would be a board which would not desire to press too hardly on the workpeople. Neither would it desire to kill the trade; but to promote human sympathy. Then he drew the attention of his hon. friend to the fact that it was a body which employers themselves wished to see created. They had been reminded by his hon. friend the Member for Worcester, whom they were all glad to see back in his place in the House, that employers in large trades were absolutely unable at present to ascertain the rate of wages paid by other large employers. They said, "We know what we pay and what we can pay, but we do not know what is paid by others." Directly those people were got to tell all that, some understanding would be arrived at as to what the true rate should be, and when they had public notification of these facts throughout the district confusion would be done away with and undercutting almost entirely stopped. Nearly all the employers called before the inquiry said there was no desire to undercut, but that they were being undercut by the sweaters. His hon. friend said just now that this measure would be an interference by the State with trade. But we had long recognised the principle that there were some people in this country so weak and so miserable that Parliament must interfere for their protection. We protected women and children in factories. Then what were the Truck Acts? Some seventy years ago it was admitted, even by the Manchester school, that in regard to wages it was necessary to make a substantive interference with freedom of contract. Nothing could appear to be fairer than that a man should be paid by commodities or the building of a cottage, but it was admitted that in the case of bad employers that led to fraud and oppression, and the system was done away with and the law enforced payment of wages in current coin. In 1884–5 Lord Cross under the most successful Unionist administration expanded the Truck Acts. By the Potteries Act, Employers and Workmen Acts, and Factory Acts, Parliament with the practical consent of both sides of the House interfered definitely with wages and for the protection of poor, miserable, weak, and unorganised workpeople. The State in its own interest had a right to interfere and see that the wages paid were not so desperately small as to bring an actual disability on those who were working for them. The real purpose of this Bill was to introduce into unorganised trades that effective power of negotiating with employers which more highly organised trades enjoyed. If there was a chance of a trade becoming organised, he was quite sure the Labour Members would agree that it was undesirable to do anything to prevent that trade from getting organised. This Bill had been introduced in a most persuasive and tactful manner, and the discussion had been one which must make every one the better for having heard it. With the limitations he had suggested, he felt that the passing of the Bill could do nothing but good and would do much to rid us of what was a national evil.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have listened to the speech of my right hon. friend with much sympathy and agreement with both his argument and his views. In regard to some of the criticisms he has made on the Bill, I will address myself to them more fully later on; but, after the strong expressions of opinion from the right hon. Gentleman, I trust that the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, will not persist in the hostile Motion of which he has given notice.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I am sure I have the authority of my hon. friend who moved the Second Reading of this Bill in saying that we would accept a further limitation of some of its provisions. We are anxious that the experiment should be tried under favourable conditions.

SIR F. BANBURY: If the promoters of the Bill will accept the proposal of my right hon. friend that the clause with reference to the powers of extension should be deleted, and that the measure should be confined to one trade as an experiment I would withdraw my Motion.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: It would depend very much on what the one trade would be. Of course, in some trades the results would be illusory. We are anxious that the experiment should be tried on a sufficient scale, whether with two or three trades or not, but in some form. We would not insist upon having in the Bill the double option of a schedule of trades and the authority to the Home Secretary to extend the number. We propose that the Bill should go to a Select Committee, but it is impossible to say what that Select Committee will do.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I think that it is hardly necessary for me to say anything after the reception which the House has given to the Bill; but I may trouble the House for a few minutes, for I have to speak for the Department of the Government which is primarily responsible in the matter, and to express the views of the Government in regard to this measure. It is a most remarkable fact, too, that, although this Bill has been before the House for some time, and the subject of it has been before the country a longer time, initiated and pressed by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean, there has been no hostile Motion put down upon the Paper against the Bill, which in itself is a new departure. That is a most significant fact, as showing the trend of public opinion on this subject, and I am glad to notice that the consideration of this question to-day has been conducted with amenity and freedom from party politics. As to the preliminary observation of the hon. Member for Worcester, whom I congratulate on his return to the House, I may say that the promoters of the Bill are the last men to repudiate the assistance of anyone in this House or outside it, in furthering a matter of this kind. It was, perhaps, from the super-abundance and the keenness of supporters of the Bill on this side of the House, that no names of Gentlemen opposite appear on the back of the Bill. My hon. friends are glad to accept help on this question from any quarter. I do not think it is necessary to go far back into the history of this question. The hon. Member quoted Lord Dunraven's Committee; but if we went into the matter historically we should have to go back to the brick fields of ancient Egypt. I think that some parts of the hon. Member for Worcester's speech, in which he sought to couple tariff reform with this Bill, were a little unnecessary. The introduction of the tariff question is in my judgment totally irrelevant to the consideration of the Bill, and in saying that, I wish to illustrate my position by reminding the

House how, in the very centre and heart of a protected country, the evils of sweating exist as prominently as they do here. I have here a Memorandum published in Germany on the Exhibition of Home Industries opened in Berlin in 1906, which included all sorts of products. I will just give the House two or three points from that Memorandum. It shows that in the toy industry the gross earnings per hour of a whole family engaged in making small wardrobes for dolls' houses amounted only to 2½d. That is one illustration of a sweated trade. Another is that the average hour's wage in the home industries represented in the Exhibition, works out at ten pfennig, somewhat over a penny, in the cases of work which requires no special skill; and that will yield a pitiful wage of about 6s. a week. The Memorandum also states that the Secretary of State for the Interior visited the exhibition and was said to be much impressed by the fact that for making a lady's mantle the workers received two shillings, while the middleman earned seven shillings, and the selling price was five pounds. You have, therefore, in Berlin, under the amplest system of protection against the importation of sweated goods—you have in the heart of Germany evils as gross and glaring as exist in our country. I pass from that. Let us proceed to consider this problem entirely apart from party lines and fiscal controversies. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that we shall be quite ready to meet him on his own ground on the fiscal question or any other when we find time, but let us put it aside for the present. The history of this question is interesting. It is interesting to note that when the factory system was first introduced the efforts of Parliament were directed towards improving the conditions of work in the factories—in other words, to levelling up the conditions of work in the factories to the conditions of work in home life as they were then; and the result of State interference has been to improve the condition of the factories so that they are incomparably better now than they were fifty or sixty years ago, though they are still open to improvement. It must be our endeavour now to improve the conditions of home work and make them if possible as tolerable and as productive as the conditions which exist at the present day in the factory world. We have tried for the last twenty years to get at this great difficulty—a difficulty which is a grave reflection upon our political and social system. We have endeavoured to get at it by legislation. We have tried to get at it through the sanitary laws and through the factory laws. In 1895 my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the Second Reading of his Factory Bill, referring to the clause which provides for the furnishing of lists of out-workers, said he hoped that through that clause the out-workers would be tracked to their lair. It was hoped then, that by bringing daylight into the homes of these workers, an improvement would be effected. I cannot say that much has been done, but some improvement has been effected, and there has been some result from the operation of the Particulars clause to which my right hon. friend referred. But, nevertheless, at the present moment, though the numbers are uncertain and in some instances unobtainable, we know that a vast army of people—men and women—who are wretchedly poor, live under the most abject and squalid conditions, existing on a pittance eked out by the Poor Law and by private charity, which are in fact a premium to the employer who exploits their poverty, out of which he gets too frequently a most inordinate profit. Why is this? The main reason is that these poor people are unorganised. Why are they unorganised? They are unorganised because they are separated, because they work under an infinite variety of different trades and different employers; because they are wretchedly poor, because they are aged and infirm, and because too often for one reason or another they are inefficient workers themselves. We have here to deal with a grave and a festering evil; let us see if we can get at what should be the proper remedy. It must be remembered on this question that we have not only to speak for ourselves, but to speak to the great outside public, who are not fully informed and will be asking what the House of Commons are doing in assenting to a strange and new proposal. We must speak to them, and I am speaking to them now when I say that these poor people can no more remedy their own miseries than a fever-producing swamp is able to remove itself and its dangers from those who live near it. The *laissez faire* system has failed. Legislative enactments up to the present have failed. The Factory Acts and the Sanitary Acts have failed, and under a judgment of the High Court many of these poor people are now deprived even of the help afforded them by the operation of the Truck Act. They are helpless, miserable, and powerless, and the time has come for trying to discover some remedy more effective than those which have hitherto been attempted. It is within the power of the State to restrict competition, but the real evil among these people is, the competition, not to get more, but to take less. That is the real evil. Probably many people do not realise how far the State has gone already in industrial interference, in how many directions, and with what excellent results. Let me refer to the Particulars section in the Act of my right hon. friend. Under Section 116 of the Act of 1901 the Home Secretary after inquiry may by Order require any employers in any trade to furnish the workers with particulars of the rate of wages applicable to any work. That is pretty strong State interference, and I am not sure whether my hon. friend the Member for the City of London objected to it when the Bill was passing through the House in 1901.

SIR F. BANBURY: I do not remember.

*MR. GLADSTONE: He had plenty of opportunity. The price or rate so furnished frequently, if not usually, agreed upon by the employers under the pressure of powerful trade organisations, is by law to be paid to the worker, and the State in fact forces the employer into a contract written and enforceable. The last census gives the total number of home workers to whom the Particulars section can be extended as 450,000, and of these it may be roughly estimated, that under the Orders that have been made since 1901, particulars have been required to be given in about 363,000 or just about 80 per cent., and in 1905 it was estimated that about 340,000 of these workers received particulars, or about 76 per cent. of the whole.

SIR F. BANBURY: Why not?

*MR. GLADSTONE: Why not? I am glad the hon. Baronet agrees. So successful, so beneficial has been the operation through the extension of the Particulars clause, that I think that all who have given attention to the matter will agree that the time has come for making the Particulars Order general.

SIR F. BANBURY: I said why not give particulars. Giving particulars is very different from fixing wages.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I have pointed out that the law compelling an employer to give particulars forces him into a legal contract, and I further state that already as regards the piece-workers, interference by the machinery of the State has resulted in a very material increase of the average payment received by piece-workers to whom this Particulars section has been applied. The State has already gone far to help certain classes of workers. The Government, in regard to the men they employ directly have adopted the principle of a minimum wage, in effect, if they have not yet adopted it without reservation and in full. But we must all agree that where novel principles are proposed we have to see that they are well thought out. We are now asked to set up wages boards for the purpose of effecting compulsory but limited arbitration. That applies not to fixing wages generally, but to fixing a minimum in certain trades, and in my opinion this Sweated Industry Bill thoroughly deserves the consideration of the House. There is no magic in the term wages board. Other methods of procedure on similar lines which may effect the same object and more speedily may be evolved. There are other schemes; I will say nothing about them now as we have this particular Bill before us. At the present time in trade disputes methods of conciliation and arbitration are gaining favour every day, and there is nothing very startling in carrying those methods further by statutory provision. It is our duty, wherever possible, to substitute reasonable and rational machinery for securing agreements and settlements, whether in the humbler and smaller industries in which sweated labour is engaged or in the larger industries which concern the general mass of the working people throughout the country. But for effective arbitration, whether in a large trade or in a small one, as my right hon. friend pointed out, there must be effective organisation, there must be effective representation both of the employers and the employed. There should be and there ought to be no weakening of that effective organisation which is a necessary condition of arbitration. That consideration leads me to the heart of the matter, because in the sweated trades there is no power of combination and no effective representation either of employers or of employed. It is to bring that about that I think the Bill is designed. As I understand, the general object of the Bill is to organise and induce agreements between employers and employed, to secure a reasonable payment for work done, and to secure for unorganised workers a measure of the advantages which powerful organisations have already obtained for their members. That object is good and desirable, and I am glad the House practically agrees to it. There are great difficulties in the way, however. I do not pretend to deny to the House that I think the difficulties are considerable. I am not going to weary the House by any unnecessary or detailed criticism, but I must guard myself in one or two matters. I do not agree with sub-section (1) of the first clause, and I would point out that there is some inconsistency between that sub-section and the sub-section which follows it, and some anomaly created, because the first sub-section makes the establishment of wages boards throughout the country mandatory for the particular trades mentioned in the schedule, but the next sub-section provides that the Home Secretary may on application, if he thinks fit, direct the establishment of a wages board for any other trade in any district of the country.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: Perhaps it might be convenient to say that the schedule was not in the Bill as it stood two years ago. I think, and one or two hon. Members promoting the Bill agree, that there is ground for saying that there is a certain inconsistency there, but we are anxious to get the power to inquire with a view to additions to the schedule.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I quite follow my right hon. friend and thank him for his explanation. The Home Secretary is in the abstract a long-suffering person, who submissively accepts any added burden which Parliament in its wisdom may think fit to impose upon his shoulders; but at the present time he is technically and absolutely responsible for 200 decisions a day, and the number of difficult administrative questions with which he has to deal is constantly increasing, and I think the House should take care how it proposes to add to the burdens already resting upon the Home Office, unless at the same time it makes provision for lightening those burdens in other directions. Quite apart from that, the responsibility indicated in the second sub-section would be too great for any individual Home Secretary to bear. Imagine the Home Secretary beset by Members of Parliament who are themselves beset by all kinds of trades in their constituencies—there are 12,000 trades; the pressure would be enormous, and the concentration of demands on the Home Secretary disadvantageous. There is another point that arises. The title of the Bill is the Sweated Industries Bill, but there is no such limitation as is implied in its title in any of the sections. A further point is the frequent manner in which the Secretary of State is brought in, no less than twelve times in the course of the Bill, but I understand that the promoters purposely left a good deal of the Bill vague, and that they do not intend to put all these duties on the Secretary of State. It is quite true that it will be the duty of a responsible Government to work out the practical details if and when the Bill is practically taken up, it is not to be supposed that private Members can have the information at their disposal which will enable them to settle technical details. One other point. The Bill omits a great deal of the machinery which is in the Victorian Act, and which I think would be very necessary. Under the Victorian Act the orders of the Board have to pass both Houses of Parliament, and there is also an industrial court of appeal.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: That was not in the Victorian Law at the time this Bill was drawn. It has been added since.

*MR. GLADSTONE: We learn by experience gained under the Victorian system. But one caution I would venture to give to the House, and it is this: Personally, I think the Victorian system has been a success and that it will stand the test of time, but it seems to me that up to the present moment it has not stood the full test as it has not been subjected to severe strain. The system has grown up subsequently to the great industrial disturbances of 1896, and wages have been on the up grade since; but nobody knows what will happen in case of a slump in trade and prices, and until they have been worked for a longer time the wages boards in Victoria cannot be said to have been tested. I think I have said all I have to say now in the shape of criticism. Our wish at the present time is to have a general discussion and refer the Bill to the Select Committee on Home Work. It has been desired that a second Committee should be set up, but that, I think, is impracticable. The present Committee is strong in numbers and in intelligence, and should have an opportunity of considering the Bill upon the evidence they have taken. We cannot duplicate the work and the trouble that has already taken place. An extension of the reference is not necessary. The Committee is really considering the question in its present form, although no Bill as such is specifically before it. I hope the members of the Committee themselves will draw some profit from the instruction. They will see that the House is now desirous of information and of guidance from them. I hope and believe that their special attention will be directed not to all but to the important details which are necessary to a well-considered Bill, in order that they may be able to give us their guidance. There are various matters which personally I should like to see referred to their consideration. I will briefly mention one or two of them. I should like to know how far it is desirable that this Bill should extend to factory as well as home work. I should like the particular attention of the Committee to be drawn to the question of machinery for the enforcement of awards between employers and workmen. The inspectors find it very difficult in Australia to get at the true state of things between employers and employed. I should also like the Committee to consider what would be the best form of appeal, and how far it is possible to define the boundaries of the trades to be selected. There are other matters, but I am sure my hon. friends will use their own judgment and give their attention to the elucidation of these things. Up to the present I have spoken freely, but not, I hope, without responsibility, with regard to the office over which I endeavour to preside as well as I can. The House will ask me what view the Government, as a whole, take of the Bill. If the Bill is read a second time, my Hon. friend proposes to refer it to the Select Committee. The Government accepts the proposal. In the opinion of the Government a case is made out for an inquiry as to the methods that should be devised to deal effectually with the evil of sweating in unorganised trades. I therefore accept the proposal of my hon. friend. The House will not be surprised to hear that this acceptance is not to be considered as committing the Government itself to the principle of a compulsory minimum wage. The House will naturally expect this decision because the Government set up this Committee of inquiry last year. A Commissioner was sent out specially to Australia to report on the working of the principle there, and it is only natural and proper in these circumstances that, until the two reports are submitted to the House, the Government should reserve their judgment. I hope that great profit will accrue from the Report of the Committee. I will not trespass further on the time of the House. I thank the House for listening to me so attentively. The lot of these poor people is so hard, so full of wretchedness and misery, their evil plight so complete, that a remedy is necessary. Though evoking the sympathy of all, it may be extremely hard to provide a workable remedy. Their lot is so bad it may even justify experiments in legislation which, if they fail, will not do harm provided that they are carefully and prudently designed, but which, if they succeed, may be profitably extended on a wider basis. It is the miserable condition of these workmen, their endless wretchedness, the hopelessness of the position as the law now stands, it is these things which breed intense discontent, and cry aloud for redress. As far as I am concerned I will do everything in my power to diminish and to remove what is proved to be a grievous stain on religion, on morality, and on civilisation.

*MR. BUTCHER (Cambridge University) said that although he had not been present during the whole of the debate he had listened very attentively to the Home Secretary and had found it very difficult to discover the real drift of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He hardly knew on which side the right hon. Gentleman was going to come down.

MR. GLADSTONE: My speech had referred largely to the debate which preceded it. I omitted many things as to which the hon. Member might have expected to have heard something from me; but the hon. Member must remember that the larger portion of my speech had reference to speeches which had been made before and which he had not heard.

MR. BUTCHER quite admitted that, but contended that it might have been possible to discover the real sentiments of the Home Secretary without listening to the whole of the debate. He perceived, however, that while the right hon. Gentleman accepted the Second Reading he knocked the bottom out of the concession by saying he did not commit the Government thereby to the principle of a compulsory minimum wage. That was a pretty clear indication of the views of the Government.

MR. GLADSTONE: I think the hon. Gentleman is taking up a very unfair position. I gave most obvious and common-sense reasons for showing that at the stage at which we have arrived it was not possible to commit the Government.

MR. BUTCHER said he was only referring to the particular point of the minimum wage. If the Government could not give a definite opinion on that point, they had not made up their minds upon the Bill which they were now going to support. The Government after accepting the Second Reading intended to refer the whole question to a Committee to find out how far the principle of the Bill could be carried into effect. He would have thought they should have discovered from the Committee what was to be said in favour of the Bill before committing themselves to its principles. Now it was to be referred back to the Committee on Home Work, with the addition of two or three names. If the Bill was going to that Committee a good many names ought to be added, because this Bill was based on the report of that Committee.

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.): The Committee has not made a report yet.

*MR. BUTCHER said that the Committee had published Minutes of Evidence. However, he would make no more statements which, however well-founded they might appear to be, only met with a flat contradiction from hon. Members opposite, but would proceed with his argument. There was no one who did not earnestly desire to do away with this cruel evil of sweating, but what was the machinery for carrying out this Bill? The machinery was given in Clause 9. In that clause there was a provision to appoint inspectors. How were they to work? He assumed that all employers would have to give a list of the persons they employed; that the inspectors would be empowered to go not only into factories but into homes and even into single rooms in our great cities in which these workpeople were employed, and find out what the wages were that were given to them. Such a system might possibly work in a bureaucratic country like Germany, but it was against all the instincts and traditions of the English people to have inspectors intruding upon their home life. He did not believe if an army of inspectors were created they could carry out efficiently the work required of them by this Bill. How were these inspectors to work? Were they to be let loose in every single room where workmen and workwomen were employed, some of them in eking out by a scanty wage what their husbands or brothers already received? If this machinery was to deprive them of those wages was not that an argument in favour of the scheme being unmanageable, impracticable, and contrary to all the instincts, history, and training of the people of this country?

SIR THOMAS WHITTAKER (Yorkshire W.R. Spen Valley), as Chairman of the Home Work Committee, thought it would be recognised that there was some difficulty in the way of the House coming to a decision in any way on this particular question when it was to be referred to a Committee still engaged upon other work. He, therefore, ventured to hope that if the House accepted the Second Reading and referred the Bill to the Committee on Home Work they would refer it to that Committee rather as a matter for their consideration than with the idea that the Committee should endorse the principle of the Bill, as that would rather impair the value of the Committee. It was not desirable to discuss the merits of the Bill while they were taking evidence. It must be perfectly clear to the House that though this evil was great, the solution of it was very complicated and difficult, and he deprecated anything in the nature of a bargain or agreement between the hon. Member for London and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean as to any particular clause or detail of the Bill. The Bill was a vague one, and there were many points of great difficulty which would have to be grappled with if it was to be adopted, and the Committee viewed with some diffidence the reference of the Bill to them. He expressed alarm also at the suggestion that more members were to be added to the Committee. There were already twenty-one members on the Committee, and as the work attending the drafting of a Bill by twenty-one Members of a committee who held different views would be difficult, he hoped no more Members would be added to it. He had, however, derived some comfort from the remarks of the Home Secretary who had said it was for the Government to work out a solution. The proper course for the Committee to pursue would be to continue their inquiry, and then take up the Bill after they had completed their evidence and come to their conclusions. If the House understood that, he did not think there would be any serious difficulty in referring the Bill to his Committee.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he had listened with attention and he believed with some profit to the whole of the debate. He much appreciated the speech of the Home Secretary, but when he looked at the Bill it seemed to him that there were really two Bills, one of which had been spoken to in the debate and the other the Bill which had been printed. He had not heard a single speech in favour of the Bill as printed. The Bill foreshadowed by the hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, was a totally different Bill from that which was printed. Everybody was agreed as to the evils that existed, and were anxious to remove them, and the only question that had to be considered was whether the way suggested was the best way or whether the evils could be dealt with by a better way. Everybody wanted to remedy these evils, but a good deal of what had been said in favour of the Bill was really an argument against it. Everybody had spoken about the excellent results which had followed arbitration brought about by the voluntary agreement of both sides. This was a Bill for superseding that arrangement and bringing the Government in to adjudicate in every trade. There was a tremendous amount of sweating in some places in connection with the tailoring trade, but the tailoring trade as a whole was comparatively well paid. That was the case in Leeds, a town with which he was familiar, where, notwithstanding the introduction of many foreigners, wages in the tailoring trade had gone up. If they were discussing the Bill as spoken to by the mover and seconder and not the Bill as printed he was quite willing that it should have a Second Reading. He agreed that the only way to do anything was by experiment, and he would be very glad to see an experiment made on a small scale. What he complained of was that these sweated industries had only been used in this way by the people who introduced this Bill as a peg upon which to hang larger proposals in the future. Having carried this Bill they would proceed to extend its provisions to all the industries in the country. Under the Bill any six men could move for an inquiry by the Home Secretary and the Court appointed by him would have power to administer the oath and to compel an answer to a question. A witness could be compelled to answer everything down to the smallest details of his trade; the Court would be a public Court and the evidence given before it would be put before the country. Such a thing would ruin many firms. A great number of men who were now carrying on business would be ruined if their real position were published. If it was known for instance what the exact amount of their overdraft was, what their liabilities were, and what a touch and go proceeding it was every year between whether they lost or gained, such men would immediately lose credit and have to shut up. He ventured to think that no case had been made out by those who had spoken for the Bill for any such drastic investigation. The House must remember that while there was a great deal that ought to be altered, Great Britain's was one of the most flourishing countries in the world under the particular system under which we worked. Were they going to upset the whole of that system? It was all very well to refer to the system of compulsory arbitration as it existed in New Zealand and Victoria, but the chief industries in those countries were not included in the arbitration law; they were agricultural; there was therefore no analogy. In Victoria the two great industries were excluded from the Act. In this country every trade was to be included. If a Bill could be brought in to increase the wages of the agricultural labourer a good deal might be said for it; agricultural labourers were the worst paid men in the country, and it was difficult for them to organise because they were so spread in small numbers over the country. But the thing could be done in a different way. If powerful trade unions would establish local branches a good deal might be done for the agricultural labourer, and already a union was being started amongst the labourers. So much of our future greatness as an empire depended on the security of the principle of self-help and self-reliance that he looked with a great deal of anxiety and disfavour on the supersession of that principle by the intervention of the State. The great objection to all these permanent statutes was that they could not adapt themselves to other conditions than those which they were passed to deal with. No doubt the Truck Acts when first brought in dealt with great evils, but things had altered since then and many of these evils had been removed by the progress of trade, free trade, and the combination of workmen, which had tended greatly to mitigate the evils under which they laboured. On the other hand the Truck Acts in his opinion did an infinite amount of harm to the working classes and, for all the good they had done, might have been passed by the brewers and distillers. The Truck Acts insisted upon a man being paid in money and prevented his making a private arrangement with his employer under which the employer paid something to the wife during the week by way of supplies instead of having to pay as at present his workman £2 or £3 at the end of each week, a great part of which was spent by some workmen at the public-houses on their way home. If the effect of this Bill was to raise wages generally 30 per cent. and the wages of the sweated workers by 300 per cent. he would vote for it, because a well paid and well fed man did infinitely better work than a bad paid and ill-fed man. He had had men himself to whom he had paid 3s. a day and whom he had had to supersede by men to whom he paid 6s. a day because they could do the work more cheaply. He desired to make it clear that in anything he said he was not opposing the Bill which had been spoken to; he was only speaking against the Bill which was printed and which was an entirely different thing, and which if carried into law would entirely upset the whole of our industries and be a serious blow to them. It would be far better to leave this matter to the voluntary efforts of trade unions. They would do better in the long run than Government interference, because Government interference would brush away all spirit of initiation and co-operation. While it was desirable that an experiment on a small scale should be made, it was highly undesirable to pass such a Bill as that which had been printed. He very much doubted whether in the long run we should in this country ever rise to the highest possible conditions of labour unless we recognised the fact that liberty after all was one of the greatest possessions of mankind.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said he had no desire to intervene in the debate, being anxious to get the Bill into the Committee, and he would not have risen but for the fact that the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had said that no case whatever had been made for the Bill. During the time which he had been a Member of the House and had attended the discussions on private Members' Bills he had seldom heard a case so completely substantiated as the case which had been made that day. That this was so was evidenced by the fact that all sections of the House had displayed a wonderful amount of unanimity in its favour. He had listened very carefully to the speeches made in favour of the Amendment and had been somewhat interested to hear the arguments which had been advanced in opposition to the Bill. It appeared to him that the seconder of the Amendment only entertained a certain amount of opposition to the Bill. The hon. Member seemed to think that when the Bill was placed in the hands of the employers and their workpeople, and the wages boards were established, one result would be to force wages up above the level made possible by the law of supply and demand. That was nothing more than a fear on the hon. Member's part, and an entirely groundless fear. The Bill did not attempt to force wages up in that direction at all. What it did propose to do was this. He would take the east of London as an instance. In the east of London it was well known that in the tailoring trade for the production of exactly the same article a considerable difference was paid. A good employer paid a reasonable price for the article while others had taken every possible mean and despicable advantage of the conditions of the worker, and for the same class of article had paid a considerably lower figure. What this Bill sought to do was to recognise that the price paid by the good employer was reasonable and fair, and to compel the sweater or bad employer to bring up the figure that he paid to that paid by the good employer.

Captain J. CRAIG said the hon. Member had missed the point of his argument. His argument was that if the bad employer could not get the work done at the low or sweating wages which he now paid he would adopt other means, and the individuals now suffering through this sweating would be no better off than they were before, but rather worse.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON said he had no desire to misrepresent the hon. Member in the least; he took down the words used and the hon. Member not only used the words he had quoted but gave figures in support of his argument, which were quite sufficient to justify the deduction he (Mr. Henderson) had drawn. This raising of the recognised price from that paid by the sweater to that paid by the good employer not only assisted the worker but did some justice to the good employer. What he hoped the House would endeavour to keep in mind was that the object of this Bill was to bring the bad employer up to the level of the good employer. The right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, seemed to think that the Bill might be made even more experimental than it was at present. He and those who thought with him were disposed to make this an experiment and there were only three trades placed in the schedule. Those three trades had been selected after very careful consideration, and they had been chosen because experience had proved that they were the three worst possible trades to organise, and inquiries had proved they were the worst sweated trades in the country. While the Committee would be quite prepared to pay the greatest deference to any suggestions offered by the right hon. Gentleman he was afraid they could not pledge themselves to the point of putting more trades into the Schedule. He thought they ought to retain the power of instituting inquiries; but probably the objection of the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, that there might be an unlimited extension of the Bill, would be met if it were provided that the proposal to include any trade in the schedule should lie on the Table of the House for so many days. In view of the unanimity which had been so marked, and in view of the admittedly terrible evils that the Bill was attempting to deal with, he hoped that all sections of the House would give the Bill a Second Reading. It would then go to the Committee and would be reported back to the House, and if the point which his right hon. friend had mentioned appeared not to have been adequately met, there would be another oportunity on the Report stage for making further Amendments. No question had been discussed in this Parliament on which there had been greater unanimity of opinion.

Mr. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) said he was thoroughly in accord with the purpose of the Bill, and he was very pleased to hear what had been said by the Home Secretary as to this measure and his sympathy generally with wages boards, which would, he hoped, dispel to a great extent the jealousy that unreasonably existed between labour and capital. He hoped they would not have to wait till the Committee reported, otherwise the Bill would be shelved. He thought the House should know that owing to the action of the trade unions certain municipal bodies had passed a rule which as regarded the consumption of municipal articles absolutely did away with sweating. In Liverpool they had a fair trade clause under which every employer bound himself to observe the hours of labour and the rate of pay prevalent in the district, and that did away with any chance of sweating as regarded the consumption of articles which were purchased by the municipality. Whilst it was absolutely possible under such a clause as this to put the municipality in the way of purchasing their articles in the best markets where they paid the most reasonable wages, such a clause was absoluteless useless unless the city councils and those who elected them and all consumers, observed the same rule. The Home Secretary had referred with some disparagement to the statement that tariff reformers believed it would do away with sweating. He was not aware that that was a principle of tariff reform. He had never heard it so stated, and in his belief the only action that did away with sweating was the action of high-minded men who desired to do their duty to their fellows. The Home Secretary had used as one of his illustrations that a mantle on which the labour cost 2s. was sold for £5. What was the use of their passing regulations aimed against sweated industries in municipalities as regarded purchases if they did not themselves, either through legislation or their own actions, make their own purchases on the same rule? What was the use of passing a law requiring proper wages to be paid for the making of trousers for policemen while their own shirts were made by sweated labour? They did not take steps to prevent the consumption of articles produced by sweated labour abroad. It only meant the destroying of the industry of their own poorer classes unless they established some principle which upheld prices to such an extent that they could afford to pay not only proper wages in this country, but in the country of origin. He hoped the Bill would pass this session, and though it was only a small measure they could insert clauses which would carry out the fair trade clause which was adopted by all corporations. If they brought in anything that would adopt that principle they would be really doing their duty.

Sir F. BANBURY said he could not withdraw his Amendment because he believed in the rightness of his position. Still, in view of the fact that nearly everyone in the House thought there should be a modification, that the Home Secretary was opposed to the extension clauses, and that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean was also willing to have these clauses deleted if it was possible——

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: Subject to the statement which was made by the Leader of the Labour Party as to the power of inquiry.

Sir F. BANBURY said that in view also of the fact that there was apparently a strong opinion in the House that the Bill should go to a Committee which was apparently to bring forward another Bill, he would not put the House to the trouble of a division, but would allow his Amendment to be negatived.

Question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question," put, and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to the Select Committee on Home Work.—(*Mr. Toulmin.*)

SCOTTISH LAND BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir E. Tennant.*)

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) thought they ought to have some explanation. He did not rise in a hostile spirit to the Bill, but really in ignorance. He thought they had plenty of time to get some explanation from some Member in charge of the Bill as to the general nature of its provisions, and he hoped then he might be able to vote for the Second Reading, but he could not say that at present.

Sir E. TENNANT (Salisbury) said the Bill had been printed and had been in the hands of Members for some days, and it had surprised him to know that it was down for that day. That was really the reason why he did not propose to make any further remarks in moving the Second Reading.

Sir F. BANBURY said that was a very excellent reason from the point of view of the hon. Member, but he was not sure that it was an excellent reason from the point of view of the House. He had been unable to study the provisions of the Bill until that moment. It seemed, looking at the memorandum, that it was not a bad Bill, and he was not at all sure that he would not possibly be found in the same lobby with the hon. Member. But it was due to the House and to hon. Gentlemen opposite to know what the Bill was. The first two lines established the excellence of the Bill, because it adapted to Scottish circumstances the provisions of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1907. He did not quite agree with one or two of the other provisions, but they could be altered in Committee. Under these circumstances he hoped the Lord Advocate would advise the House to accept the Bill.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) said he did not know whether the hon. Baronet who moved this Bill really and seriously asked the House at that period of the afternoon to read it a second time with very little consideration and, as had been pointed out, without any detailed explanation of its provisions.

Sir F. BANBURY: May I point out that we discussed this Bill last year, and therefore there is no necessity to discuss the principle again.

Mr. SINCLAIR said the observation of the hon. Baronet was just an illustration of the great difficulty the House must have in discussing this Bill at such short notice. The hon. Baronet took a very active part in Committee and in that House in considering the Government Bill of last year which dealt with this subject, but if he had had time to compare the Government Bill with the proposal of his hon. friend he would have discovered there was a radical difference not only in the principles of the two Bills, but in the method of treatment. There was a Bill which was complementary to this Bill which dealt with another large branch of the subject. The Government Bill dealt in one scheme with land legislation for the whole of Scotland, but this Bill left entirely out of sight the existing Acts and their administration as dealing with the Highlands of Scotland. The Crofters Act and the large part of Scotland under that Act did not come within the scope of this Bill, neither did the Bill touch that important branch of Scottish administration that came under the supervision of the District Boards. One could hardly realise the importance of this subject to Scotland and the strength of feeling that existed in Scotland on the subject. It was a strange commentary on the criticisms which had been passed on the Government's hurry to legislate—hon. Gentlemen opposite urging the House to pass a Bill of this importance, complexity and scope on a Friday afternoon without having any speech from any supporter of the Bill explaining its provisions.

Sir F. BANBURY: I beg to move that the question be now put.

*Mr. SPEAKER: There is still a quarter of an hour.

Mr. SINCLAIR said it was satisfactory to those who had supported the Government that rival Bills formulating definite schemes should have been placed before the House, and it was valuable to the discussion on this question that there should have been placed on the Paper actual proposals which the opponents and critics of the Government's Bill desired to be considered. Nobody could deny that there had been a considerable growth of opinion in regard to this subject since the Government first placed its Bill before the House eighteen months ago. It was satisfactory to Scotsmen that what they had done had not been without benefit to their English colleagues, and that the Government had been able to pass a similar Bill for England. It was the English Bill that had given the hon. Baronet the suggestion which he had embodied in these clauses. He would only make one general remark on the fact that the present Bill followed the English model, and that was that the circumstances of Scotland were so entirely different from those in England that to follow such a course would land them in great difficulties in Scotland. It was entirely unsuitable to Scotland because it left out of sight Scottish circumstances and the present administrative machinery in Scotland. All these considerations made it impossible for the Government to look with favour upon this Bill. Considering the late hour, he could not consent to the Second Reading.

*Sir JOHN DEWAR (Inverness) said he had no hesitation in moving that the Bill be read that day six months. He did so for the simple reason that Scotland did not want the Bill. For the last six months nothing had been discussed in Scotland but the land question, and if there was a Bill the Scottish small holders did not want it was the English Bill. That Bill no doubt suited England, but it would not suit Scotland. To give the county councils control in this matter of small holdings was useless in Scotland. They had already had experience of county councils in that kind of work, and in his constituency they had had a glaring example of the county council's inability to do anything. The county councils were simply no use at all for providing small holdings. Out of 1,300 applications to the Inverness-shire County Council not a single allotment had been made. So far as that part of the Bill was concerned he would be very sorry to see it applied to Scotland. It was impossible for poor men or men without leisure to become members of county councils. In Inverness-shire it took several members the best part of a week to attend a meeting. A member of the county council told him that when he had to attend a meeting he left on Monday morning and did not get back till Friday night, and it cost him £6 or £7. Of the fifty-five members on that county council, no fewer than thirty-four were either landlords, factors, or big farmers, all of whom were opposed to the principle of small holdings.

An HON. MEMBER: Who elected them?

*Sir JOHN DEWAR said they were elected by the people, but the last thing they were elected for was to look after small holdings. The County Council of Inverness had petitioned against the Government Bill. How many crofters were there on the council? Only one. How could one expect sympathetic treatment of this question from county councils of that composition? The county work was admirably and economically managed by men of business experience, but if a question of this kind was thrown into it they would get men in sympathy with and fit to manage small holdings, but perhaps not otherwise with the leisure and experience necessary for county council work. They had had an example of that in the last elections. The Sutherland and Caithness Councils had made it a test question, and the great majority of the old councillors had been turned out. The bitterest feeling existed in these counties. The Northern papers were full of it. One landlord was turned out. He wrote not only to the newspapers, but to the county clerk, that under no circumstances would the man who had opposed him be allowed to offer for his contract for wire fencing. Was it desirable that that feeling should be introduced in to all the county councils? If the work was entrusted to them it would not be county councils of the present complexion who would have to deal with it. Would hon. Members rather have the question considered by county councils chosen in the heat of an election contest or by an impartial tribunal of men specially trained for the purpose who would devote their whole time to it? This Bill was an insult to the crofters. It would result in one man under crofter tenure and his neighbour under the English system, which would lead to confusion and bad feeling.

MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir John Dewar.*)

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes, 44; Noes, 184. (Division List No. 21.)

AYES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balfour RtHnA.J. (CityLond.)
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt.Hn.Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, RtHn.J.A. (Worc
Clark, George Smith(Belfast,N.
Clive, Percy Archer
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gardner, Ernest
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Hills, J. W.
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn.Sir John H.
Kimber, Sir Henry
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Morpeth, Viscount
Pease, Mr.Herbert (Darlington)
Rawlinson, John FrederickPeel
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford,East)
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool,Walton)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thornton, Percy M.
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Watt, Henry A.
Wortley,Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Edward Tennant and Sir Frederick Banbury.

NOES.

Asquith,Rt.Hn. HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury)
Baring, Godfrey(Isle of Wight)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Chas.
Cameron, Robert
Causton,Rt.Hn. RichardKnight
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins,SirWm.J.(S.Pancras,W.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Corbett, CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Rendal
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Sir J.A.(Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras, N
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferens, T. R.
Fienness, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glendinning, R. G.
Gooch, George Peabody

Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jenkins, J.
Jones, SirD.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire
Joyce, Michael
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk Bg'hs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
Mallett, Charles E.
Marnham, C. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Muldoon, John
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Kendal (TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. . (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Malley, William
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E.(Waterford)
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson,SirG.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Schwann, Sir C. E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair,Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Thomas, SirA.(Glamorgan, E.)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker H. De. R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Ward,John (Stoke uponTrent)
Ward,W.Dudley(Southampton
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,JohnCathcart (Orkney)
White Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke, (York, E. R.)
White,Patrick (Meath, North)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St.Pancras, S.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whitley and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE.

Select Committee appointed to examine the Publications printed by order of this House or presented to it through Public Departments and to call attention to any case in which unnecessary expense has been incurred.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of: Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Cleland, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. William Jones, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Maddison, Mr. John Robertson, and Mr. Toulmin.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 24th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies Bill [H.L.]; North British and Mercantile Insurance Company Bill [H.L.]—Presented, read 1^{a}; and referred to the Examiners.

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.]—Presented, and read 1^{a}.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA, NO. 1 (1908).

Further Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo (in continuation of "Africa, No. 1 (1907)").

ARMY (ESTIMATES).

Memorandum of the Secretary of State for War relating to the Army Estimates for 1908–1909.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

LUNACY.

Return to the Lord Chancellor of the number of visits made and number of patients seen by the several Commissioners in Lunacy during the six months ended 31st December, 1907.

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANKS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Account of the gross amount of all sums received and paid by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt on account of banks for savings and friendly societies in Great Britain and Ireland, from their commencement at 6th August, 1817 to 20th November, 1907, inclusive; of the aggregate amount of the separate surplus fund of all savings banks at 20th November, 1907, and of the gross amount of all sums transferred to or paid out of such surplus fund in the course of the year ended 20th November, 1907; and of all expenses incurred by the said Commissioners for salaries of clerks, or other incidental expenses during the year ended 20th November, 1907. Account of the several transactions which have taken place, during the year ended 20th November, 1907, in the investment of all moneys which came into the hands of the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt for savings banks and friendly societies, etc. Statement showing the aggregate amount of the liabilities of the Government to the trustees of savings banks and friendly societies respectively on 20th November, 1907, etc.

PRISONS, ENGLAND AND WALES (APPELLANTS UNDER CRIMINAL APPEAL ACT, 1907).

Draft rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Prison Act, 1898 and the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, for the treatment and custody of appellants not admitted to bail.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889.

Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Aberdeen to the Secretary for Scotland under the provisions of the Act, for the year 1906–1907.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

BRIDLINGTON PIERS AND HARBOUR.

Abstract of the annual general account for the year ended 26th July, 1907; delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

THE CONGO FREE STATE.

***The Earl of MAYO**: My Lords, I rise, in accordance with the Notice standing in my name, to draw attention to the affairs of the Congo Free State and to move for Papers. The Papers which I ask His Majesty's Government to produce are the same as I asked for last session, namely, copies of the title deeds granted to the monopolists and any information thereon as to their power to force the natives on the Congo to labour. The events that have lately taken place at Brussels compel those pledged to reform on the Congo to bring before this House and His Majesty's Ministers and before the country the affairs of that State.

Misrule on the Congo has been the theme of many essays, many letters and

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

articles in the Press, and many debates in both Houses of Parliament, and hundreds of meetings have been held throughout the United Kingdom on the subject. Those meetings culminated in a huge assembly at Queen's Hall on Friday night last, over which the Lord Mayor of London presided. No one could have been present at that great meeting without having been immensely impressed with the enthusiasm of the audience, whose feelings were adequately expressed in the concluding words of the Lord Mayor's address, which ran as follows—

> "All that they asked was that the Congo territory should be administered in accordance with explicit promises given and according to treaty rights and obligations."

I will not dwell upon the misrule on the Congo, nor in any way dilate on the treatment of the natives, nor on the monopolist system affecting trade in those regions. The whole government of the Congo State is an absolute evasion of the Berlin Act, 1884–1885, and also of the Convention made between Her Majesty's Government in 1884 and the International Association of the Congo. Those are admitted facts; they have been admitted in every debate that has taken place in Parliament during the last five years, and they have been admitted when in opposition by Ministers who are now in office, and by Members of the Opposition when they held office.

I pass from the debates and treaties dealing with Darkest Africa, and take your Lordships to Brussels, where a game is now being played between King Leopold and his Ministers, the stakes on the table being the Congo and its natives. To understand the power of the King in this game we must examine Belgian opinion on the Congo question. Owing to the pressure of public opinion in England our Government have invited Belgium to annex the Congo, and to put an end to the abuses in King Leopold's African Colony. It must be remembered that this is the first time since Belgium obtained her independence that her Parliament has been called upon to decide a question of international importance. It must be remembered also that Belgium has no colonies, and has never had a colonial policy. Her Parliament is faced with this question—a Belgian colony and a colonial policy, and under circumstances absolutely abnormal.

If we imagine that the state of public opinion in Belgium on the Congo question is anything approaching the public opinion in this country we are deceiving ourselves most grossly. The Belgian Press has for years been saying that England's wish to interfere in this matter is not for the sake of the natives, but because she wants the Congo for herself. Belgians, as a rule, have looked at this question in the very light in which the British Government did not wish them to look at it, namely, as an unfriendly interference in the domestic affairs of Belgium. It is unnecessary for me to say that we do not want the Congo or any part of it. We do not want anything to do with Belgium's domestic affairs. This is not a question of Belgium's domestic affairs; it is an international question, and the Act of Berlin is a complete negation of those ideas. The Belgian people know nothing whatever about the Congo, and I do not think they care to know.

When the Commission appointed by King Leopold went to the Congo and confirmed by their Report the abuses which we all knew so well in England, scarcely any notice was taken of that Report in Belgium, and it created no emotion whatever in the minds of the Belgian people. The truth is, the Belgians have always considered the Congo as King Leopold's private enterprise, and that he was paramount Sovereign of those regions. In fact, according to the expression of M. Beernaert, the late Prime Minister of Belgium, the King was—

> "As absolute a Sovereign as Louis XIV. was of France,"

and Belgians to this day know nothing about the ill-treatment of the natives on the Congo. But they are aware of this, that annexation of the Congo may cost the Belgian taxpayer money.

There is another thing to remember. This question has never been before the electors at any general election in Belgium, and at no election has any Deputy referred on the platform to the Congo or to any colonial policy whatever. Notwithstanding all this, a certain number of politicians in Belgium in a better position to know what was going on than the mass of the people, and also men of business whose interests had suffered by the action of the monopolist companies in the Congo State, came to the conclusion that the only way to put an end to the colonial autocracy of King Leopold was for Belgium to annex the Congo. Belgium, as your Lordships know, had the right to annex the Congo in 1901, under a Convention passed by M. Beernaert with the Independent Congo State in 1890; but when it was brought before the King he indignantly protested, and the matter was shelved. The Commission appointed to look into the matter took five years to get constituted, and it held only one sitting. Meanwhile protests in England became more and more bitter, and Belgian Ministers had to face the situation and produce some sort of scheme of annexation.

Now, my Lords, this brings us to what our Foreign Office has labelled "the Belgian Solution;" and may I add, in passing, that as at present compounded it is exceedingly distasteful. Let us examine the so-called Belgian solution. It takes the form of a Treaty of Cession, the contracting parties being King Leopold, the Congo State represented by the three principal secretaries of the Brussels executive staff in the Congo Administration, and Belgium represented by the Ministers of that State acting under reserve of the Legislature's approval. To put it shortly, if the Belgian Parliament agrees, the Congo Free State is to belong to Belgium. If your Lordships will allow me, I should like to read Article I. of the treaty—

> "His Majesty the Sovereign King declares that he transfers to Belgium the sovereignty of the territories composing the Congo Free State, with all the rights and obligations attached thereto. The Belgian State declares that it accepts this transfer, will take over and assume responsibility for the obligations of the Congo State such as they are set forth in Annex A, and undertakes to respect the foundations existing in the Congo, as also the acquired rights legally recognised, of third parties natives and non-natives."

We may put aside the rights of the natives altogether; they have no rights except on the Lower Congo. The last words of this Article—

> "respect the foundations existing on the Congo, as also the acquired rights, legally recognised, of third parties—"

reveal the subtle arrangement of this treaty. Belgium agree, under the proposed treaty to maintain the Crown Domain monopoly, and all the other company monopolies that have been granted by King Leopold on the Congo, and the territory covered by these monopolies is where all these terrible horrors and this enforced labour has taken place. In other words, the fundamental nature of the Congo system is to be perpetuated under the treaty. Throughout this enormous area legitimate commercial intercourse with the natives of the country, guaranteed by the Berlin Act, is prohibited by agreements whose beneficiaries have become the owners of the natural produce of the soil, in violation of the terms of the Berlin Act.

There was a debate on the subject in the Belgian Chamber, and the words of M. Schollaert, the present Prime Minister of Belgium, are most interesting. M. Schollaert said—

> "Finally, it is our duty to state, and we do so with perfect openness, that the tenour of the treaty has provoked certain apprehensions in many minds, even among citizens devoted to a colonial policy and admirers of the work of the Sovereign of the Free State. The attentive study of the question will show to what extent the objections which have been raised are well founded, and whether they cannot be satisfied by some new means."

The French expression was, *par certaines modalites nouvelles*. M. Schollaert continued—

> "You do not expect us to improvise a solution at this moment. For it must not be forgotten that the object of the discussion is an agreement which requires the consent of two contracting parties."

The treaty was fully criticised, the result of the debate being that no decision was arrived at.

Now we hear that there is to be a compromise between King Leopold and his Ministers. It must be remembered that King Leopold has lately been spending a very large sum of money—Congo money derived from the Crown

Domain—on palaces and public buildings in Brussels and elsewhere in Belgium, and this has, no doubt, appealed to the Belgian people. Now it is suggested, by the compromise, that these funds, instead of being dealt with by the King, should be administered by a Committee, mostly of members of the Belgian Parliament and other nominees of King Leopold. There is to be no alteration as to the manner in which the revenues are procured, the only change being in the *personnel* of those administering them. I ask this House in all seriousness, Does it matter to the wretched natives of the Congo forests how the revenues derived from the Crown Domain are spent; or who spends them? Is their lot likely to be any better? Indeed, this whole Treaty of Cession and the compromise cannot be taken as a serious effort on the part of the Belgian Ministry to annex the Congo, and we most strongly protest against it. And in what I say I speak for those who are greatly interested in this matter, the Congo Reform Association, and many others in England.

There was a message in *The Times* of to-day from that paper's own correspondent at Brussels, which rather shows what is going on between the Ministers and the King. *The Times* correspondent telegraphed the following statement published in the *Etoile Belge*—

> "It is certainly the case that the exchanges of views which have taken place during the last few days have not led to any result, and an agreement has not been reached regarding the list of public works to be carried out with the revenues of the 'special fund' which is to be derived from the Crown Domain."

What becomes of the reform on the Congo that we have looked for? Why, the King and his Ministers are actually fighting on the question whether or not certain public buildings in Belgium are to be erected. There is no question of reform on the Congo. I ask His Majesty's Government, Is this the Belgian solution for which we have been waiting for so many years? I cannot believe it. I still have in my mind our King's most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament at the opening of the present session, in which occurred these words—

> "My Government are fully aware of the gr at anxiety felt with regard to the treatment of the native population in the Congo State. Their sole desire is to see the government of that State humanely administered in accordance with the spirit of the Berlin Act, and I trust that the negotiations now proceeding between the Sovereign of the Congo State and the Belgian Government will secure this object."

The Earl of Mayo.

That, I take it, is the policy of our Government, and I also take it that that policy will be carried out; for this is not by any means a party question, as, I think, was pretty clearly demonstrated at the huge meeting at Queen's Hall the other night. I feel, however, that the dilatory tactics promoted by King Leopold will still be carried on. We have had an instance of this in the proposed "compromise"—I should like to call it by an uglier name.

I trust I do not offend the feelings of our Foreign Office when I say that England's efforts should not be in the direction of diplomatic foil play at Brussels, but in direct action on the Congo. Our Government cannot, I believe, be always waiting and watching for a policy of perfection in that part of Africa. I have a suggestion to make, and it is this. By one of the Articles in the Convention of 1884 between our Government and the International Association of the Congo, we have the right to place consuls in those regions. At present in all that immense territory, as large as Europe (leaving out Russia), we have only three consuls and two of them are vice-consuls. I feel sure that if consuls were appointed there—and this does not prevent other Powers appointing consuls—the natives would not be so badly treated. To bear out what I say, let me quote from *Hansard* the words of the noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, in your Lordships' House on 3rd July, 1906. The noble Marquess then said—

> "I agree with my noble friend that this was a very important reservation; and all I can say is that I hope, if these abuses continue, we shall claim our right to appoint consuls in the Congo. I do not care in the least whether there are British subjects to look after or not; but what I do feel is that the presence of half a dozen Englishmen located in the centres of trade within the Congo will be worth more than a whole row of inspectors or officials belonging to the Administration of the Congo Free State."

To that I say, Amen. But the abuses still go on, and the warehouses at Antwerp are at this moment full up with Congo rubber. There was a quotation in *The*

Times to-day from a letter of the Rev. S. Gilchrist, of the Congo Balolo Mission, and his letter shows that there has been very little alteration in the modes of procuring rubber on the Congo.

We ask His Majesty's Government to declare to Belgium first, that annexation under present terms is totally unacceptable; and, secondly, that the rights of the natives to the soil and its produce be insisted upon. And in this matter, I think the honour of this country is affected. England suppressed the slave trade. I believe it took nineteen years to do that. I can hardly think it will take nineteen years to bring about reform on the Congo. But how, I ask, can England remain inactive when a condition worse than slavery exists next door to her own African Possessions?

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty for further correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo, and other Papers, if any, bearing on the grants and title deeds of companies in the Free State."—(*The Earl of Mayo.*)

*EARL CROMER: My Lords, like the noble Earl to whom we have just listened, I do not think it is necessary to dwell at any length on the manner in which the ruler of the Congo State has abused the high and responsible trust conferred on him by Europe. The indictment against the Congo Administration, though at first received in this country with a certain amount of incredulity, turns out, when the facts are well known, to be absolutely crushing. I have seen something, and I have heard more, of maladministration in backward states at the hands of despotic, irresponsible rulers, but I can assert without hesitation that never in my experience have I seen or heard of anything at all comparable to the abuses that have grown up in the Congo State. There has been a cynical disregard of the rights of the subject race, coupled with a shameless exploitation of the resources of the country in the interest of foreigners for which I believe a parallel cannot be found in the history of modern times.

I do not base this severe condemnation of the Congo Administration on any special acts of cruelty and oppression, though even on this basis an unanswerable indictment might be framed; I base it on the fact that the administration has been conducted on thoroughly unsound principles, and I say that unless a radical change is made in the system of administration no serious improvement can be anticipated. In all countries similar to the Congo territory three essential principles must be accepted as preliminary to the establishment of anything like good administration, and all these principles have been flagrantly violated in the case of the Congo.

The first principle is that the duties of administration and the commercial exploitation of the country should not be vested in the same individuals. The counter-principle of associating these two functions together we tried ourselves years ago with the old East India Company, and though we had at the head of it many men who were not only merchants, but statesmen, the system, if not a failure, was at the best but a very modified success. In the Congo the officials employed have been commercial agents rather than administrators, and it cannot be doubted that the standard by which their services have been judged has been, not their administrative efficiency, but the amount of money which, by any means justifiable or the reverse, they have poured into the Congo treasury. The first principle has thus been flagrantly violated.

The second principle is that by the establishment of a Civil List the amount placed at the personal disposal of the ruler of the State should be a fixed amount and that the remainder of the revenue should be applied by properly qualified and responsible authorities to objects in which the subjects of the State as distinct from the ruler have a direct personal interest. A despotic ruler always demurs to this. I remember some years ago—I think it was in 1879—there was a question of appointing an Englishman to supervise the financial affairs of Turkey, and the Sultan did me the honour to consider my name in connection with the appointment. When the matter was referred to me, I asked if His Imperial Majesty would be prepared to accept a Civil List, and then, as I had anticipated, further discussion of the subject was allowed to drop. Well, in the Congo there is no Civil List. The whole of the revenue of the country is at the absolute disposal of the ruler; and a large portion of it has been applied to the construction of palaces and to other objects in which the natives have not the remotest personal interest. The second principle has thus been violated.

The third principle is that the Crown Domains on any large scale should be administered by responsible and qualified authorities in the general interest of the community. In the Congo State almost the whole country has been handed over to speculators, and the chief of the State is the principal speculator among them. These speculators have ruthlessly exploited the resources of the country in their own interest. A very analogous case occurred in Egypt some thirty years ago. Ismail Pasha had managed to accumulate in the hands of himself and family a million acres of the best land in Egypt by arbitrary and illicit means over which a thin and very transparent veil of legality, had with great care and ingenuity been thrown. When the Powers of Europe came to deal with the subject they considered it an abuse of words to describe these establishments as private property. The whole of them were confiscated. They were then administered by a mixed Board of European and Egyptian officials, and eventually sold, mostly in small lots, to native proprietors. I cannot help thinking that some drastic proceeding of this nature is required in the Congo. I am quite sure no satisfactory solution is possible in the Congo unless some interests are sacrificed. There are three interests involved—the interest of the Congolese, of the Belgian taxpayers, and the interests of the *concessionnaires.* I estimate the interests of the Congolese and of the Belgian taxpayers very highly, but I place the interest of *concessionnaires* in the third rank, and, I should add, rather low in that rank. If there is a sacrifice to be made they should make it; and I hope the Belgian Parliament, to whom we must first look for a solution of this question, will not deal too tenderly with the rights of *concessionnaires.*

Turning to another point, let me say that I should be the last to advocate any excessive interference with the domestic affairs of a foreign country. More than this, I sometimes think the British public, in the exercise of their unquestionable right to say anything they please, sometimes go to rather indiscreet lengths in the direction of advising foreign nations how they should manage their own affairs. In this case we need not be deterred by any scruples of this nature. The Berlin Act is perfectly plain. It lays down that there is to be freedom of trade, and it condemns the creation of monopolies. The Act of 1884, which was passed between the British Government and the Congo Association, is also perfectly clear. Moreover, the declarations of M. Beernaert in 1885, when he was Prime Minister of Belgium, and of Baron Lambermont, who was the Belgian representative at the Berlin Conference, were also perfectly explicit.

Earl Cromer.

I will read what was said by the noble Marquess behind me (Lord Lansdowne) in 1906. I do so because the statement has been challenged, and, although I have no doubt he could give a much better answer himself, I will, if he will permit me, give a rejoinder for him. He said—

> "Quite irrespective of any right we enjoy under the letter of these Acts, we have a moral right to interfere, which comes to us in consequence of the false pretences—I cannot use a gentler word—under which the Congo State has acquired its privileged position in that part of Africa."

The Belgian Commissioners, on page 151 of their Report, state the alleged rights of the Congo State—in other words, those of King Leopold—in the following very plain language—

> "The Congo State can dispose itself solely of all the products of the soil, prosecute as a thief any one who takes from that land the least of its fruits, or as a receiver of stolen goods any one who receives such fruits."

It is necessary to deal with this point, not only because I think Mr. Morel who has rendered such admirable service in the cause of Congo reform, is perfectly right in thinking that this question of freedom of trade lies at the bottom of the whole business, but also because it is essential to establish our right to make our voice heard, not merely on grounds of public morality and humanity, but also on indisputable treaty rights.

On what grounds are these rights contested? Apparently on the grounds that freedom of trade exists, and that no monopolies have been created. M. Woeste, a distinguished member of the Belgian Parliament, made the following statement:—

> "When Lord Lansdowne declared, in the British House of Lords, that the Congo was covered with monopolies of an abusive character he committed an astonishing confusion of thought; he mixed up monopolies with the legitimate and rational development of private property belonging to specified landlords."

Therefore it appears that the argument and the application of the argument are something of this kind. In the first place, it is held that the natives of the Congo have no proprietary rights in the soil of their country or its products, and that the whole of these rights are vested in the ruler of the Congo State. In the next place, the ruler hands over the whole of these rights to certain "specified landlords," he himself being the principal specified landlord; with his active assistance and with the help of his armed forces, which could not be at the disposal of private individuals, there is introduced a barbarous system of collecting the revenue, which necessarily leads to the enslavement of the greater part of the population. The third link in this strange chain of argument is that anyone, not being a "specified landlord," who buys from the natives of the country the only product they have to sell—rubber—is to be treated as a thief and a receiver of stolen goods. Under this system it is stated that free trade exists and there are no monopolies. This is the system which was described by Baron Lambermont at the Berlin Congress as one which gave everybody an unlimited right to buy and sell. If this is free trade I give the tariff reformers full permission to write me down a protectionist or anything else they like except a free trader. But in point of fact the united authority of all the lawyers in Belgium or in all Europe will not convince me that a system of this sort is sanctioned by any law, human or Divine, or that it can be made to harmonise with the treaty rights of other Powers, including those of Great Britain.

The view His Majesty's Government take of this important question was stated in August, 1903, in a Circular addressed by the Foreign Office to the Powers, containing these words—

> "His Majesty's Government maintain that until unoccupied land is reduced to individual occupation, and so long as the produce can only be collected by the native, the native should be free to dispose of the produce as he pleases."

This principle, which I hold to be perfectly sound, is one which I have no doubt was asserted after taking qualified legal advice; and I trust it will be stoutly maintained in spite of any quibbles by which it may be attacked. The right of the British nation to make its voice heard is perfectly clear, and the only questions for discussion are as to the desirability of exercising that right and the time and method of exercising it.

Both His Majesty's Government and the Belgian Parliament and people are in a position of great difficulty, and I should much regret that any language used either by me or by any one else in this House should add to their embarrassment. It cannot be doubted that a strong feeling of indignation has been excited in this country by the manner in which the Congo has been administered; and, moreover, that is accompanied by a feeling of shame that as one of the signatories to the Berlin Act, Great Britain should have been in any way contributory to the establishment of such a system as now exists in the Congo. The Congo Reform Association is naturally impatient at the slowness with which the diplomatic and international mill grinds. I can fully sympathise with them. I have had a prolonged and somewhat bitter experience of that mill; and I know how heart-breaking it is to look on while some flagrant abuse calls for reform, and whilst it is impossible to apply any prompt and effective remedy. The Congo Reform Association appear to contemplate that in certain contingencies some decided action even more drastic than that to which the noble Earl alluded should at some time or another be taken by His Majesty's Government.

I think it would be premature to discuss this matter at present. It has to be remembered that in a matter of international concern any step which separates this country from the international concert is one of a very serious nature. It is, however, as well to remember that under the Act of 1884 His Majesty's Government has the right not only to appoint Consuls, but to establish Consular Courts. I hope that, should the occasion arise, that right will be exercised. I cannot help thinking that if Consuls were appointed and at the same time means of locomotion were provided to enable them to move freely up and down the river, and Consular Courts were established, and if at the same time we insisted on the unquestionable right of British subjects to trade throughout the Congo, some effective pressure would be exerted on the Congo Administration and a considerable step in advance would be made.

In spite of what the noble Earl has said, I still cling to the hope that the Belgian solution may be possible. I do not go nearly so far as to say that we are under any obligation to accept anything which may be settled in Brussels. Far from it. Our right to make our voice heard is perfectly clear, and I venture to think that no solution will be satisfactory unless it gives to the Belgian Parliament full and complete Parliamentary control over the whole of the Congo Administration. It must be borne in mind that, although we know something of the discussion going on in Belgium, the Belgian proposals in their final form are not yet before the world. When they are known I hope that the noble Lord the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs will be able to assure the House that the Government will not acquiesce in any arrangement which does not give the full Parliamentary control of which I speak. If that Parliamentary control is once assured, there will then be some solid guarantee that the Act of Berlin will be respected, and the administration of affairs improved. Without it, there can be no such guarantee. If once a real and effective control is secured, I should not, for my own part, be inclined to scrutinise too closely the other details of the Belgian arrangements; but that control must be fully secured. In the meantime we can no doubt do a great deal to enlighten Belgian public opinion. It cannot be too clearly understood that we do not wish any territorial advantage. I conceive that it would not be at all in the interests of this country to add to our world-wide responsibilities by assuming the direct administration of any portion of the Congo State. All we want is that the Congo should be governed on such principles as commend themselves to the civilised world. It must be borne in mind that the Belgian people and Parliament are labouring under great difficulties. Not only is the issue complicated by the introduction of other matters connected with the internal affairs of Belgium, with which we are not concerned; but the greater portion of the Belgian Press has up to the present time been under the control of the Congo Administration, with the natural result that the Belgians themselves are ill-informed of the facts.

The noble Marquess behind me, in the speech from which I have already quoted, said something which was tantamount to alleging that the people of this country had been duped. So also have the Belgians. They have been entirely deceived as to the true facts of the case. So far as I can understand, a considerable section of the Belgian public are reluctant to take the great responsibility of governing the Congo, more especially in view of the financial responsibilities; and I am not at all surprised, for if the country is to be properly administered, the revenue, which depends largely on the yield of rubber, is certain to fall off. On the other hand, large reductions may be made in the expenditure. Why is the present large military force maintained in the Congo if not to aid in the present iniquitous system of collecting taxes?

I have myself seen on the Congolese stations on the Upper Nile garrisons far larger than are thought necessary in the adjoining territories of Uganda and the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan. I believe these garrisons might be largely reduced with great advantage. The financial difficulties, though very great, may not be found insuperable if the question is tackled in a proper spirit; and the proper spirit in which to tackle it is to look to the interests of the Congolese and of the Belgian taxpayers rather than to the interests of the *concessionnaires*. Keep the river open and have a sufficient police force on the river banks. The main portion of the territory will then require little administration at all. The main thing is that we should destroy the present system, and that we should not pause in that work of destruction merely because it would not be possible to place immediately anything very satisfactory in its place.

Let me add that I know something of the difficulty of substituting free for forced labour. We had to deal with it in Egypt, and a difficult and thorny problem it was; but it was solved in the face of obstacles which, I think, were greater than those that now exist in the Congo. A solution will never be obtained in the Congo if the first object of the Congo Association is to pay large dividends. Up to the present the question, as it affects the Congo, has been considered from a point of view wholly different from that from which we viewed it in Egypt. In the report of the Belgian Commission I read a statement to the effect that the triumph of the law was to make the black man work. In Egypt we thought that whilst giving every inducement to the Egyptian to work, the triumph of the law consisted in preventing him from being flogged for voluntarily choosing to remain idle. It is for the Belgians to say which principle is more in harmony with the practices of the civilised age in which we live.

I feel confident that His Majesty's Government will receive the full support of Parliament and public opinion in endeavouring to find some satisfactory solution of a question which so nearly touches the honour and interest of this country. We sympathise with the Belgians in their difficulty; and we await their solution. It will be time to consider what further steps should be taken if that solution turns out to be unsatisfactory. It must be remembered that the alternative to the Belgian solution is some form of international Government. An appeal has already been made by us to other nations; and the result was not altogether encouraging. I think the only potentate in Europe who evinced any desire to co-operate in the reform of the Congo was the Sultan of Turkey. It must, moreover, be remembered that international administration—though sometimes it has been made use of in default of anything better, is, at best, a cumbersome and inefficient machine. Further, in view of the state of affairs in Macedonia, the moment is hardly propitious for inviting the Powers to an international concert about another matter. Therefore, when the Belgian solution is better known it should be examined in a very friendly spirit and should not be rejected unless for paramount reasons. But it must be a reasonably satisfactory solution. If it be a mere sham, if it be but a mere cloak under which the present system in the Congo is to be continued, I hope His Majesty's Government will have no hesitation in resolutely rejecting it.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I am sure the House and the country are grateful to the noble Earl, Lord Mayo, for bringing this subject forward to-night, and for the manner in which he did it. We thank him not least for having elicited the speech to which we have just listened. It is no disparagement, I hope, to the statesmen and diplomatists who have addressed the House on this subject year by year, to say that we have listened to-night with a quite exceptional interest and respect to one whose administrative record in Asia and in Africa has given him in the history of this country an enduring place as a past-master in the difficult science which treats of the relations to one another of men of different race, religion, and colour.

The noble Earl's speech has reminded us, if a reminder were necessary, that this is not an isolated question concerning the Congo alone. Attention has been called in this House before now to a notable utterance by another great African administrator, Sir Harry Johnston, who has written the following memorable warning—

> "Unless some stop can be put to the misgovernment of the Congo regions, I venture to warn those who are interested in African politics that a movement is already begun, and is spreading fast, which will unite the negroes against the white race, a movement which will prematurely stamp out the beginnings of the new civilisation we are trying to implant, and against which movement, except so far as the actual coast line is concerned, the resources of men and money which Europe can put into the field will be powerless."

It is in part that fact, or that peril, thus foreshadowed, which brings upon the stage in this matter those of us who, for the most part, are accustomed to stand outside the difficult and delicate questions of diplomatic controversy and international polity.

It cannot be too often recalled that the creation of the Congo State was, in part at least, the handiwork of men whose interests lie mainly in philanthropic and religious work. It would be untrue, of course, to say that the commercial element was wholly absent. But the creation of the Congo was not a mere commercial adventure. Again, it was not due to any desire for national aggrandisement on the part of Belgium, or of England, or of any other State. It was not a result following upon a war. It was in a large measure, at least, the outcome and the evidence of an honest desire for the civilisation and the betterment of a great tract of Africa, the character of which had been made known almost suddenly to the people of Europe. It was that fact which gave special appropriateness to the action of the Lord Mayor of London in presiding over the great meeting in the Queen's Hall last week, a position which he occupied not as the head of the commercial life of the city, but as the central figure in England's philanthropic and benevolent work.

The citizens of this country are deeply conscious of their personal and collective burden of responsibility for the state of things in the Congo. The burden is one which rests heavily upon them. We turn to the Foreign Office representatives, not for the facts in the Congo—for those, unhappily, we know too well—but for information as to the forces and powers behind those dark deeds, the record of which has been placed bravely before us by those who have earned the thanks, not of England only, but of the world for the way in which they have brought these facts to light. We ask, What can you tell us about the forces that are behind? We are necessarily in ignorance upon that, and we look to those who can speak officially on the matter for information. It is unquestionably true that negro slavery has been resuscitated in, perhaps, its darkest or reddest form in the Congo. It is true that for that England is in part responsible. Is the only answer we are to get year after year to be merely this: "We must wait and hope for for the best"? Two things the country wants. First, a consecutive statement from the Foreign Office of the steps which led up to the announcement on the subject in the King's Speech, and of what exactly that announcement amounts to. Secondly, what grounds the Government have for the opinion—if it be their opinion—that it will be easier to get redress for the black men's wrongs after the Congo is annexed by Belgium than before.

To some of us, amateurs in these matters, it would seem that if this country were acquiescent in an annexation which carried on, though in other hands, the old *regime* of ownership by Belgians of these black men's property and, indeed, their lives, it would be harder and not easier to make protest against it when the arrangement had been adopted by Belgium. I may be mistaken in that view, but it is one of those things upon which we should like to have fuller information and guidance than we have at present. After the momentous and responsible utterance in the King's Speech, we cannot but believe that there is something which can now be told which may give us hope.

This is a story, this is an occasion which far transcends any mere question of contemporary politics. It is surely true to say that we are here face to face with the big principles of right and wrong. The moral law, as we have constantly been reminded by great teachers, was not written for men alone in their individual capacity, but also for nations. If the English people, on whom responsibility indisputably rests, reject by their indifference or inaction the application of the moral law to a great question such as this, some penalty, on whomsoever it falls, must follow. We have experience, we know what the past has cost us. We have suffered, and suffered rightly, for the neglect or the wrong-doing of other days. We want to be sure that we are not incurring afresh by our inaction a like answerableness for new wrong-doings to-day. It is upon that that we await in eager anxiety the reply which the Government will give.

*LORD CLIFFORD OF CHUDLEIGH: My Lords, the noble Earl on the Cross Benches, who has spoken with such authority, has told your Lordships that we have every right to interfere in this Treaty of Cession, or whatever the arrangement come to by the Belgian people may be. I should like, if your Lordships will give me your indulgence for a few minutes, to urge the point that not only have we the right, but that it is the duty of His Majesty's Government and of this country, to interfere to the best of our ability. I have never been one of those who have attributed to the founders of the Congo State, or even to its administrators, any undue proportion of original sin. I have always regarded them as mortals with the ordinary instincts of humanity.

I wish to argue to-night that, inadvertently and ignorantly, we ourselves are almost as much responsible for what is going on in the Congo to-day as any of the parties concerned. When the Congo State was formed we, for diplomatic reasons at the time, and, perhaps, not clearly seeing what would be the result, were delighted that the King of the Belgians had taken up the question and placed himself at the head of that State, and we acquiesced in that arrangement in the interest of humanity and civilisation. The Belgian people felt pleased that their King should occupy that position, that Belgian subjects should have the work of developing and civilising this great territory, and that Belgium should have an enlarged opening for her enterprise and commerce, and the King himself was proud to be regarded as the leader of a great philanthropic movement. Many hard things have since been said about the King of the Belgians, but I for one honestly believe that King Leopold was actuated by the ideals with which he set out on this venture, and with which he was at first credited.

But there was one vital blot on the whole scheme, which we, of all nations in the world, ought to have discerned. Perhaps some of us did suspect it, but the temptation was to disregard it and to hope for the best. We knew perfectly well that a Government of a civilised nature set up in a savage country could not for some time be financed out of the taxes raised from that country, and therefore it is very questionable whether we were justified in entrusting the government of that country to anybody except a European Power prepared to take upon itself, not only the credit, but the duties and responsibility of government. The first thing which happened, of course, was that to meet the purposes of administration the King had to call in financial assistance from others. His own country were, and always had been, apathetic on the question of Congo rule. They have always said that they were unwilling to undertake the responsibility and expense of governing the Congo, and they say it now. One-half the difficulty of a settlement is that there is no Party in Belgium in favour of burdening the resources of the country by this financial responsibility. That is the greatest difficulty which lies at our door.

We are making a very large demand upon everybody concerned. We are asking the Government to do their best to induce Belgium to undertake the full responsibility of the government of the country. We are asking the King, and the bodies of financiers he has called in, to make very large sacrifices. The curse of forced labour was introduced because there was no other means of raising revenue, and we know that when forced labour is once introduced it is used for the development of a country. We are asking them to give up all this, and we know how difficult the task is. While it is not for me or for anyone in this House to suggest definitely to His Majesty's Government the direct steps they should take, we do claim that we have a responsibility for what has occurred; and, in virtue of that responsibility, we ask the Government to do whatever lies in their power to induce the Belgian Government to take over the absolute control of the finances and government of the Congo State.

*The UNDER - SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord Fitzmaurice): My Lords, the debate which has taken place every year in your Lordships' House on the subject of the misgovernment in the Congo may possibly to some persons appear, from its very repetition, to be a sign that the evils with which all of us, irrespective of Party, are contending, are enveloped in such a jungle of difficulty that little can be done; and the debate might almost to some appear to be running the risk of taking that place in our discussions denoted in another place by the term "a hardy annual." I hope that no such idea will be entertained by any Member of your Lordships' House, for I am convinced that these debates are not open to any such imputation.

On the contrary, I believe that, slow as the progress may appear to some, perhaps, impatient spirits, nevertheless the debates which have taken place year by year show an advance on each occasion. I myself, as representing the Foreign Office, have twice before, at intervals of about exactly a year, had the honour of addressing your Lordships on this subject since the Government took office. On the first occasion there was really very little to say, except to lament and accentuate the terrible tale of mis-government, and also, which was more painful, to record that the efforts made to interest the other Powers of Europe, signatories to the Berlin Act, and those who in 1884–5 had signed separate treaties with the Congo State, had unfortunately not received that support which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had a right to expect and which we had all hoped they would receive.

When I spoke last year I was at least able to say that there was on the edge of the horizon, though not much above it, a chance of a solution. That solution has been frequently alluded to to-night, and is known as the Belgian solution. I then ventured to express to your Lordships the hope that when I had again to speak on the subject I should be able to announce some further progress. I agree with every word that has been said by Lord Cromer and the most rev. Primate as to the disappointment which we may, perhaps, justly feel that things have not gone further than they have; and I can heartily endorse the view of Lord Cromer that, bearing in mind the difficulties of the situation, both international and in Belgium, and in this country, we must not be unduly impatient. Further, bearing in mind that barely a year and a half having elapsed since the important Resolution of the 14th December, 1906, known in Belgium as the *ordre du jour patriotique*, which practically decided in principle that the question of annexation was to be taken up, it is something that we are now watching the crisis of the negotiations, and that the points of difference have been reduced to a shape which everybody can grasp, and are now greatly reduced in number and extent. I consider, therefore, that it would be an exaggeration to say that no progress had been made since last year, and a still greater exaggeration to say that no progress had been made during the last two years. In justice to Belgium it ought also to be borne in mind that the Congo is not the only difficult question with which it has to deal, and that the task which it is invited to assume is no light one. Its Parliament has, like ours, to deal with many great domestic and social questions, and these react on the course of Belgian policy, not only at home but abroad. Twice during the very short period already alluded to Ministries have resigned or been reconstituted, but each of these changes has, I think, marked a stage forward and an advance in the direction of the ideas and hopes which we entertain.

We are now at a period when, as I said a moment ago, the points of difference in Belgium between the reforming Party, and the Party who wish to keep matters more or less as they are have reached a final stage; and if it is imprudent at any time for a Minister or a representative of a Minister in one country to appear to be giving an opinion on what is going on in another country, it is certainly imprudent at a moment such as the present. Words spoken here on behalf of the Foreign Office might, however unjustly, be liable to misrepresentation, and might produce exactly opposite effects to those which the speaker himself desires.

If your Lordships will pardon me, I will tell you an anecdote to illustrate what I mean. The other day I was to address a public meeting, and I found that there was an impression abroad that I was going to speak about the Congo and about Macedonia; but, believing as I did that the particular audience to which I was going to speak desired me to deal with domestic questions, and as it was not, in the opinion of the Foreign Office, desirable that anything should be said at that moment, I simply announced, at the beginning of my speech, that I was not going to say anything about the Congo or Macedonia, and I passed immediately to the other subjects with which I intended to deal. Those observations of mine, which I think you will agree, judged by even the severest standard of Foreign Office prudence, were harmless, were, however, telegraphed abroad, and I was immediately the object of an attack in certain Belgian newspapers for having compared the King of the Belgians to the Sultan of Turkey, simply because I had stated that I did not intend to say anything about the Congo or Macedonia. It was believed that under these simple words there lurked a subtle intention on my part to compare King Leopold to the Sultan of Turkey. If such a perfectly innocent observation could do harm, how cautious it is necessary that I should be this evening in saying anything which, by any means whatever, could be regarded in Belgium as showing a desire to apply undue pressure, or as containing some subtle imputation either upon Belgian statesmen or Belgian Parties.

At the same time, I feel that absolute silence might be misunderstood. I must, therefore, say a few words in regard to the position of His Majesty's Government, but they will be little more than an amplification of what may be found in the Speech from the Throne. Before I do that, however, I would like to tell my noble friend who has introduced the subject, of which he has such a complete and thorough knowledge, that Papers will be in your Lordships' hands immediately, and that I hope they will shortly be followed by another Paper containing further Reports which arrived only a few days ago. In that Paper, or some other, I trust it may be possible to insert something about the concessions and the legal effect of certain clauses in them, which is, I think, the specific point to which my noble friend alluded. We have not lost sight of that question, but I do not conceal from my noble friend that we have found very great difficulty in obtaining the information we desired.

Some suggestions have been made in the course of this debate—not for the first time—as to what this country can do without asking the leave of the Powers or anybody else. I stated last year and the year before that we had not overlooked the possibility of our having to exercise the right of setting up Consular Courts; but until we know whether the Belgian solution is going to be a reality or not, it would be premature to make any pronouncement on that question one way or the other. I may, however, say, with regard to the number of Consuls mentioned this evening, that the number has been increased. There are now not only a Consul at Boma and two Vice-Consuls, but a third Vice-Consul has been appointed.

THE EARL OF MAYO: Where?

LORD FITZMAURICE: His exact sphere has not yet been determined and, together with the spheres of the other Vice-Consuls is at present receiving the attention of the Secretary of State. His Majesty's Consul at Boma has been provided with a steam launch, and the question of supplying the Vice-Consuls at two other places with similar launches is now being considered. I hope that in this matter the Foreign Office may look for the favourable support of the Treasury. Those, however, are no doubt palliatives only.

There is another measure which has not been mentioned this evening, and which may have still larger results. The Berlin Act of 1884 contemplated the appointment of an International River Commission. Sir H. Johnston, whose name is always quoted with such respect in these debates, has often told me that the establishment of a Commission, including representatives of all the great Powers, would, in his opinion, be by far the most valuable thing that could be done to bring the breath of public opinion upon these regions. But we cannot set up such a Commission by ourselves. The consent of the Powers would be required, and those who are acquainted with the history of the Danube Commission will know that that is a matter which cannot easily be arranged.

I make no complaint that the most rev. Primate has alluded to the aspect of the question which is summed up in the words, "The appeal to humanity." I am convinced that in this matter we have not only treaty rights, but also a duty, and it is that aspect of the question, I think, which has struck the public mind. I am glad to say that the feelings which animate this country have also appealed to the people of the United States of America. That is of great importance, not merely because of the influence and power of the United States, but because the United States is absolutely free from, and cannot in any conceivable circumstances be charged with, what we, whatever we may say or do, are unfortunately still charged with by our critics abroad, and especially in certain papers which represent what may be called the interest of the Congo State as it is — namely, that we are animated in this matter by purely selfish motives—by territorial and commercial ambitions. No one can make that charge against the people of the United States. They were amongst the very first, if not actually the first, to recognise the International Association of the Congo, and, therefore, if they come forward and co-operate with us, as they are now doing, it is a fact of first-rate importance. We have been in consultation with the Government of the United States, our Minister and theirs have been in communication with each other in Brussels, and nothing could be more valuable to the cause of Congo reform or more agreeable to His Majesty's Government than that that co-operation should continue and extend.

There is one matter in which the people of the United States and the people of this country are particularly interested, and that is the refusal of the Congo State to carry out its treaty obligations with regard to the granting of sites for churches, schools, and missions. I had hoped to be able to say something satisfactory on that question, but I am sorry to say that during the last few hours I have received information from Brussels which shows the attitude of the Congo State to be more unsatisfactory on this question than it was a year ago. I can only promise that the Foreign Office will not lose sight of the question, and will continue to press it. I am glad to say with regard to the charge sometimes made, that the whole Congo reform movement was nothing but an agitation got up by the Protestant missionaries, and that the Roman Catholics took no interest in it, that such an idea only remains now in the minds of a few individual fanatics here and there. Many of the most prominent leaders of the movement in Belgium are leading Roman Catholics. No man has played a more honourable part in this prolonged struggle than M. Beernaert, the leader of the old Catholic Party. It was M. Beernaert who years ago, being Prime Minister at the time, and speaking with perfect sincerity, said of the Congo Free State that it was to be a great humanitarian and philanthropic enterprise. He said—

> "The State of which our King will be the Sovereign will be a sort of international colony. There will be no monopolies, no privileges, absolute freedom of barter, property, commerce, and navigation."

Now, every one of the undertakings which the Sovereign of the Congo State allowed to be made has in practice been reduced to an absolute nullity by influences and powers entirely outside the Belgian Government, the Belgian Parliament, or the Belgian people and against these influences M. Beernaert has continuously struggled but in vain. The result has been, perhaps, as great a negation of international treaty rights, as great a defiance of public law, and as great a sacrifice of the interests of humanity as anything the modern world has heard of. Another of the severest critics of the Congo Administration has been Father Vermesel, a Jesuit priest whose name I mentioned last year.

I cannot ask your Lordships to look forward with pleasure to reading the White Paper which I hope will be in your hands to-day or to-morrow. It is a melancholy record. It comes from men on the spot, but in it will also be found the first outward and visible sign of the co-operation between the United States and ourselves to which I have alluded, in the shape of a very interesting report from the United States Consul. Anxious as I am to avoid saying anything which may tend to complicate matters, I am obliged to say that the Government view the present situation with anxiety. Art is long, but time is fleeting. These debates cannot go on for ever and no result be achieved. I speak with a full consciousness of the enormous difficulty of the task before us. Lord Cromer has done two things to-night. He has brought his unrivalled experience to confirm the view that this maladministration in the Congo State is no figment of a feverish and disordered imagination; and, secondly, he has told, not only your Lordships, but, what is more important, our ardent friends and supporters outside that he realises how enormously difficult our task is. We look to your Lordships, to the other House, and to the people of the country to be with us in that task, and we also believe that the Belgian people will thoroughly understand that no comment has been made or suggested here upon them.

If I had to sum up the position I would say that the present state of things is contrary both to the dictates of humanity and to treaty obligation; and, while not desiring to enter into too great detail as to matters regarding which we trust entirely and absolutely to the wisdom and patriotism of the Belgian people and Parliament, we could not regard as satisfactory any arrangement which did not vindicate or secure the vindication of both treaty obligation and the claims of humanity. That, my Lords, is substantially what is contained in the Congo paragraph of the King's Speech. I think the state of things disclosed in Mr. Thesiger's despatch, included in the Papers presented to Parliament, shows that the state of the Congo is such as has been described by the noble Earl on the Cross Benches, and we consider it to be in accordance with the treaty obligations, on which the Congo State was founded, that the need for reform should be recognised in whatever arrangement is made, and that assurances should be given that reform will be carried out, not only in theory but in practice, by the Belgian or any other authority assuming responsibility for administration. I trust these words will adequately convey to Parliament and the people of this country that we look to the people of Belgium, and believe that a body elected by that people, conscious of the existence of an educated public opinion in their own country and in Europe, may well be trusted to remember the high historical traditions connected with the liberties and freedom of their own conntry, and extend the rights they themselves enjoy, so far as that is possible, to the unfortunate and long-oppressed natives of the Congo State.

*THE LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK: My Lords, the noble Lord who has just sat down has spoken under the strain—the almost painful strain—of official responsibility which I am quite sure we all recognise, and the House, if I am not mistaken, has listened to his words with that peculiar tension which shows a sense of the importance of what might fall from his lips at this time. It might seem presumptuous for a mere amateur like myself to follow the noble Lord; but as amateurs in great numbers have discussed the matter outside the House I think it is just as well that one should speak inside, and as the facts are fully known, outsiders have some justification for speaking.

The noble Lord has told us what weight his lightest words sometimes have when transmitted across the wires to the other side of the Channel. I cannot help hoping that some of his words not light, but weighty, to-night, will have considerable effect there, not less because of the great and honourable caution which he showed in uttering them. I am quite certain that the most ardent outsider will be at one with the noble Lord in what he said at the end of his speech as to the relations between this country and the free country of Belgium—a country for which, I think, Englishmen have always had a special regard, born partly of a constitutional kinship and partly, perhaps, of that kindly feeling which a protector—shall I say?—has over one whose interests he has been allowed to cherish and protect.

Two or three things which the noble Lord said gave us some encouragement. To the appointment of a third Vice-Consul I do not attach much importance as a remedy, but I do attach a good deal of value to the use of a steam launch; the swift movements of the official within his district will certainly enable him to be more useful than if he were merely stationed there. Nor, again, am I very much interested for the moment, if I may say so, in what the noble Lord said about the missionaries and the chapels; I, for my part, would rather desire that we should leave all questions of religion out of account until we have settled the very much more elementary matters which this question contains. I am grateful, however, to the noble Lord, and many besides myself will be very grateful to him, for having to-night destroyed and pulverised one of the arguments used against this agitation—namely, that it was a matter of Protestant against Catholic, and that the Catholics had no sympathy with it at all. That, I think, after his words and the speech of the noble Lord (Lord Clifford) can hardly now be maintained. What the noble Lord (Lord Fitzmaurice) has said as to the granting of sites and so on, is one proof the more that what the Congo administration really dread is the truth being known, one proof the more that the Congo rulers desire to keep out of the country everybody who can see, hear, and report. Missionaries at some peril, and certainly at the cost of enormous labour, have gathered the facts and have been faithful reporters.

A significant phrase was dropped by the noble Lord; he said the Government had still to see whether the scheme of anexation was a reality or not. That is precisely where outside opinion is most sensitive and most disturbed. May I say what we should regard as the greatest danger at this time? It would be something of this kind, that the Government feeling the enormous pressure of the international difficulty, would be too much inclined to see whether, after all, it would not be enough and indeed better to say, "We know this scheme of annexation is really quite unsatisfactory, it gives no security for radical change, but it does this, it does bring Congo administration into some kind of relation, imperfect though it may be, with the Belgian Chamber and its debates, and such is our faith in Parliamentary discussion that we think this must bring about amelioration." I cannot help feeling that there is very real danger in that, I would almost call it a temptation, to which His Majesty's Government or any Government dealing with this question must be exposed.

In the first place, this is mainly an administrative question, and the administration would remain entirely in the hands in which it has hitherto been; but further if you get Parliamentary discussion it will be discussion carried on by those who have not the money to carry out changes, for we know that any real change would mean a demand upon Belgian finance which it could hardly bear. Belgium, moreover, has not the knowledge and experience to deal familiarly with colonial affairs, and the Belgian Chamber is not accustomed to interest itself with matters outside its own land. If they have not the money, and if they have not the knowledge and experience necessary neither is there power to enforce improvement. Therefore what is to be looked for there is a very limited gain. But what is lost if that course is taken by the Government? It seems to me that there will be lost to this country the great opportunity of taking a really firm, frank, consistent line. We shall be in danger of giving away the strength which would come to us from a clear declaration that with such an annexation as that which leaves the system untouched we will have nothing to do. We should use the strength that belongs to a consistent moral position.

What we are thinking of most are the moral principles involved. The moral feeling of the country, of which the noble Lord the Under-Secretary has spoken, is one of its most precious assets. If you always oppose to it this wall of international difficulty it will get, as it were, accustomed to beat at the door in that wall in vain, and the feeling will spread, as I think I see it already spreading, that it is no good appealing to principles of justice in these matters, because they are always met with this insuperable international difficulty. And in this respect we shall never have a stronger case than we have here. For in this case there is no dispute about the facts. That is a great advantage. Another point is that there is no dispute whatever about the treaty rights to which we appeal. The case is clear: that it is also heartrending goes without saying. Nor does it involve international interests with anything like the same acuteness as in a question like that of Macedonia. Therefore I feel that if in this case England cannot live up to her old traditions as a protector of freedom and an emancipator of slaves, the effect on the future of that most precious asset—its own moral force—may be more serious than perhaps we think.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I desire to add one or two words only to the discussion to which we have just listened. I rise mainly because if one or two words were not spoken from this bench the impression might be created that there was a difference of opinion between the two sides of the House upon this important subject—a difference of opinion in the existence of which I for one do not in the least believe. I have on several occasions addressed your Lordships on this subject, using, I think, stronger language than that which I am generally in the habit of using in this House; but of what I have said on former occasions I am not disposed to retract one single syllable. For another reason I may, perhaps, excuse myself for saying much. My noble friend (Lord Cromer) on the Cross Benches was good enough to single out from speeches of mine one or two of the most emphatic statements which I have ventured to make, and to justify me with a weight of authority to which I cannot pretend. I hope it may not be the last time on which my noble friend will give me the support of his great authority.

I believe that in all parts of the House there is an agreement that the present situation in the Congo is intolerable; and that feeling will certainly not have been diminished by the statement of my noble friend who represents the Foreign Office from which we gathered that the attitude of the Congo Government at this moment was, if possible, more uncompromising than before. That is a very serious announcement. Now we are, I believe, most of us in favour of what has been described this evening as the Belgian solution, by which I mean that the jurisdiction and privileges now possessed by the Sovereign of the Congo State should be transferred to the Belgian Government. In our view that transfer must be a real and complete transfer. It would not be a transfer which any of us could regard with acquiescence if there were any reservation of rights, any conditions made which might have the effect of impairing the full and complete control of the Belgian Government over the whole of the territories without exception now administered by the Government of the Congo State.

We are not, however, yet able to say with any degree of certainty whether the settlement which is likely to be within the reach of the Belgian Government will or will not fulfil these conditions. There is a colonial law which has been before a Belgian Parliamentary Committee and there is a draft Treaty of Cession. These documents, so far as I am aware of their contents, certainly seem to contain many conditions of a very disquieting character. But the matter is still—so I understand it—before the Belgian Parliament; and it does not seem to me that we are yet in a position to pass judgment finally upon the settlement which is likely to be effected. What I venture to put to your Lordships very strongly is this—that we should in these circumstances hesitate before we do anything which might embarrass the Belgian Government in dealing with the very intricate problem which now awaits solution at their hands.

Let us not forget that all the circumstances of the case are of a kind which entitle the Belgian Government to the utmost consideration at our hands. This is not an enterprise of their seeking. They would probably be very glad, if they could, to escape altogether the heavy obligations which the transfer of the Congo State will impose upon them. Their task will be one of tremendous magnitude. It will be nothing less than the complete transformation of the whole system under which the government of this miserably oppressed country has been conducted. Let us not also forget this—that this work of colonial administration is not work of which the Belgian Government has had any experience or to which it is at all accustomed. We are therefore going to ask the Belgian Government to undertake a task of very great difficulty, and one which, no doubt, will involve it in great expense. Because, as has been truly said during the course of this discussion, if the Congo Free State is to be administered with ordinary regard to the dictates of humanity, the ill-gotten profits of recent years are bound to disappear; and it is by no means improbable that these profits will be replaced at first by considerable loss.

I therefore trust that we shall give the Belgian Government such a chance as ordinary fair play suggests; and it seems to me altogether premature that we should at this moment talk, as some people have talked, not in this House, of sending ultimatums to the Belgian Government, of withdrawing the *exequaturs* of Belgian consuls, or even of sending gunboats—there is always a gunboat at the bottom of these suggestions—to the Congo River. There are remedies and remedies; and I was glad to hear my noble friend Lord Mayo speak in terms of approval of a particular remedy which has always seemed to me to be an appropriate one, I mean an increase in the number of British consuls; and if these consuls are to be given, as Lord Cromer proposed, consular courts, and if British traders are to be freely admitted to the country, I should look forward to excellent results following the introduction of such a change. It also seems to me that the appointment of a river commission to which my noble friend referred was a very hopeful proposal. Public opinion in this country has been more moved over this question than by almost any question of the kind which I can remember; and I hope that we are not wrong in believing that public opinion in Belgium also has at last been moved by the terrible accounts which have reached us as to what has been going on in the Congo. I trust that the effect of this discussion, which will no doubt be carefully followed in Belgium, will be to satisfy the people and the Government of that country that the people and the Government of Great Britain are earnestly bent upon the complete reversal of the whole policy under which the Congo Free State has lately been administered, and that they are determined that an end shall be put to a condition of things which they have long regarded with feelings of abhorrence and shame.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The EARL of CREWE): My Lords, I agree with the noble Marquess who has just sat down that this debate has revealed a singular unanimity of opinion in all parts of the House. That, indeed, is not surprising, because that unanimity of opinion, I believe, exists all over the country. The feeling of the people of this country is that the record of the Congo Free State has been one of maladministration and of the exploiting of the country and the natives for private ends. They have read the accounts of that system of forced labour, which is not only not to be distinguished from slavery, but is infinitely harsher than some of the forms of slavery which exist on the African Continent. When your Lordships come to read the consular reports, of which my noble friend behind me spoke, the truth of that statement will be made evident.

I am very glad to know that the policy of the Government in somewhat increasing the consular establishments in the Congo State meets with the approval of the House. I think it is perfectly evident that it must have good results, and it is obvious that if the country is willing to find the money for the purpose it might be further extended. I think there can be no question that almost all the records of ill-doing in Africa, whether by individuals or companies, show that it has been very largely caused or aided by the absence of publicity. It is not necessary in this House to say, but I will say it again, that this feeling, both in the House here and throughout the country, is an absolutely disinterested feeling. I think it was Mr. Lecky who said in one of his books that perhaps the only instance of a really pure and disinterested agitation to be found in the whole course of history was the great agitation against the slave trade in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. I believe the public feeling in regard to the Congo is equally pure and equally disinterested.

My noble friend on the Cross Benches, Lord Cromer, did not mince matters in speaking of the Congo State. There was no reason, so far as its administration was concerned, why he should. But he did, I was glad to note, recognise to the full the position of difficulty with which the Belgian people are at this moment confronted. That point was also pressed by the noble Lord, Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, and I was particularly glad to hear the noble Marquess on the Front Bench opposite lay still further stress upon it. It is one of very great importance. When we are speaking of this matter we must not forget that what the Belgian people are asked to do is, without previous colonial experience, to take over liabilities of an entirely unknown character. I think it is beyond all dispute that anything like the sweeping away of the present system on the Congo must be attended by considerable cost. Negotiations with a view to transfer are now proceeding between the Sovereign of the Congo State and the Belgian people.

The right rev. Prelate who spoke just now expressed some fear that if a transfer were to take place it might not be of a genuine character, and that there would be a strong temptation on the part of the Government of this country to accept it as though it were genuine. Upon that I can only repeat that if the proposed transfer is a genuine one, and holds out the promise of an improved administration of the country, we shall heartily welcome it. But if it can be shown that it has elements of unreality—that is to say, if it is going to leave the power where it is—then we certainly could not regard it as a proper solution. We should then have to look at the matter afresh, bearing in mind the two grounds upon which we have a right to express an opinion—first, our right under treaty; and, secondly, those general rights of humanity which we share with every civilised nation. Meanwhile, like the noble Marquess, we do not desire in any way to prejudice the conduct of these negotiations, or to throw any kind of difficulty in their way.

It must be remembered that those gentlemen in Belgium who most desire to see the administration of the Congo State reformed may be themselves placed in a position of considerable difficulty if there appears to be anything like an attitude of dictation from this side of the Channel. That is a point on which I was glad to note that the noble Marquess dwelt, and it is one on which we feel very strongly. We will await, therefore, the result of these negotiations with full confidence in the sound instincts of the Belgian people, and in the hope that by these means a satisfactory solution of this most difficult problem may in due course be found.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

MILK-BLENDED BUTTER.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: My Lords, I desire to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will lay on the Table of the House, a complete list of the names approved by the Board of Agriculture for milk-blended butter; and whether he will consider the advisability of insisting on the combination with all such fancy names of some one word descriptive of milk-blended butter, as is required in the case of margarine by Section 8 of the Butter and Margarine Act of 1907. When the Act of last year was before your Lordships I asked the noble Earl on more than one occasion whether the Board of Agriculture had made up their mind as to the name under which they would allow milk-blended butter to be designated. I understood that the noble Earl had not made up his mind what that name was to be, but that he had been giving it consideration. Under the Act only one name can be given to the concoction known as margarine—namely, margarine, or some other name conjoint with it. Of the number of fancy names for milk-blended butter, I am told that nineteen have been approved by the Board of Agriculture. Some of them, I think, are misleading in their nature. One name which has been approved is "Casana," which has been interpreted as referring to cheese; another is "Ivelike," another "Bredspread," and another, which might give rise to some doubt on the part of the purchaser as to whether it was butter of not, is "Pearksown." Pearks are large dealers in milk-blended butter, and there is nothing to prevent a person who went into one of their shops for butter being asked: "Will you have Pearksown; it is the best?" I want to know whether the noble Earl and the Department of which he is head cannot see their way to carry out the Act of 1907, as regards milk-blended butter in precisely the same way in which it is carried out in the case of margarine. People would then know what they were buying, whereas at present there is a good deal of, I will not say fraud, but misapprehension, the purchaser often thinking he is buying pure butter.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, in reply to the first Question put to me by the noble Earl I will lay on the Table of the House a complete list of the names approved by the Board of Agriculture for milk-blended butter. I have the list in my hand, but I hope the House will permit me to take it as read.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: I should like the noble Earl to read it.

EARL CARRINGTON: The names approved by the Board of Agriculture are—Consumo, Casora, Casmon, Casova, Casana, Casoa, Casa, Iveldale, Iveldene, Iveleat, Ivelene, Ivelette, Ivelike, Ivelmene, Ivelmore, Mayblossom, Pearks' Breadmate, Pearks' Bredspred, and Pearksown. Then the noble Earl asked whether I would consider the advisability of insisting on the combination with all such fancy names of some one word descriptive of milk-blended butter, as is required in the case of margarine by Section 8 of the Butter and Margarine Act of 1907. I am afraid I cannot meet the noble Earl's wishes in that respect, and after I have explained the reason I hope he will not press his request. When the Butter and Margarine Bill of 1907 was introduced, it required that milk-blended butter should not be sold except under a name approved by the Board of Agriculture. The use of a single name was objected to, and it was urged by a large number of persons connected with the butter trade that the use of various names should be allowed. Wishing to please everybody, but, unfortunately, succeeding in pleasing nobody, we gave way, with the result that this list of fancy names has been approved. As one of them, "Casana," has been interpreted as referring to cheese, I will consider whether it can be omitted from the list. I hope, however, the noble Lord will not press his second request, because it would re-open a difficult question which has been settled.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: Am I right in assuming that there are over 100 names approved by the Board in which the word margarine is combined with the descriptive term?

EARL CARRINGTON: I believe so.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) (No. 2) BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 24*th February,* 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

NEW WRIT.

New Writ for the Borough of Hastings, in the room of Harvey Du Cros, esquire (Chiltern Hundreds).—(*Mr. Henry Forster.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz.,:—Seaham Harbour Dock Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That in the case of the Petition for the following Bill the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz., :—London United Tramways.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS].

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in respect of the Bills comprised in the List reported by the Chairman of Ways and Means as intended to originate in the House of Lords, they have certified that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in the following cases, viz. :—Croydon and Southern Districts Tramways; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petitions for the following Bills, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—Croydon and Southern Districts Tramways [Lords]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways [Lords]

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Bromley and Crays Gas Bill; Draycott Gas Bill; Gosport Gas Bill; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill; Southwell District Gas Bill; Tyne Improvement Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

MADRAS RAILWAY COMPANY (PURCHASE) [ANNUITIES].

Resolution reported :—"That it is expedient to authorise the creation of Annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to twelve million eight hundred and nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-eight pounds, six shillings, and three pence agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Madras Railway Company, and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India, and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending the 31st day of December, 1907."

Resolution agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Madras Railway Company (Purchase) Bill that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.—(*Sir Henry Fowler.*)

PETITIONS.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Brough and Bury St. Edmunds; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Batley (two); Hanwell; Ruardean Hill; and Southall; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Islington, in favour to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LAND FORCES (GREAT BRITAIN AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 20th February, 1907; *Mr. Bowles*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 67.]

EAST INDIA (BOMBAY POLITICAL DEPARTMENT).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 26th July, 1907; *Sir Seymour King*]; to lie upon the Table.

COMPENSATION ON NON-RENEWAL OF LICENCES.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 10th February; *Sir Thomas*

Whittaker]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 68.]

PRISONS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of Draft Rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under the Prison Act, 1898, and The Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, for the Treatment and Custody of Appellants not admitted to bail [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 69.]

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANKS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Annual Account presented, for the period ended 20th November, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 70.]

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

LUNACY.

Copy of Return to the Lord Chancellor of the number of Visits made and the number of Patients seen by the several Commissioners in Lunacy during the six months ending on 31st December, 1907 [by Act].

NATIONAL SCHOOLS (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "showing the number of National Schools in Ireland; the number of managers, clerical and lay, of the various denominations; and the forms of agreement they have executed with their teachers."—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Imports on Cereals.

MR. HAY MORGAN (Cornwall, Truro): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, what quantities of the following classes of cereals were imported into this country during the year 1902–3, and what duty was paid per cwt. and in the aggregate on each class: wheat (grain), wheat (meal and flour), barley, oats, oatmeal, maize, maize meal, peas, beans, and other corn and meal.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I would refer my hon. friend to the 47th Report of the Board of Customs for the year ended 31st March, 1903, Command Paper 1753, which contains in Table XI., Appendix I., on pages 58 and 59, the information desired in respect of corn and grain, etc., charged with duty for home consumption from 15th April, 1902, to 31st March, 1903.

Telegraphists and Postal Duties.

DR. SHIPMAN (Northampton): To ask the Postmaster General whether the question of telegraphists being compelled to perform postal duties, which was discussed at a recent interview between the secretariat of the Post Office and the executive of the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association, is still under his consideration; and whether, pending his decision, he will instruct the surveyor for the Northampton district not to seek explanations from any individual member of the Northampton telegraph staff.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) At the interview in question the representatives of the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association urged that at offices where division of the staff into postal and telegraph classes is not possible the amalgamation should be real throughout, and that opportunities should be given to each man to qualify in all the duties. Full opportunities have been given at Northampton, dating from the beginning of 1905, with the object of real amalgamation, and the postmaster of Northampton therefore acted correctly in calling for an explanation from those officers who had, in his opinion neglected the opportunities afforded them for qualifying.

Piece Work and Day Work Rates at Holloway and Mount Pleasant Factory.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central): To ask the Postmaster General how many men have gone short of their day-work rate while working piece-work at Holloway Factory and Mount Pleasant during the last year, and the amount of their weekly loss; and will he take steps to see that a man after giving a week's work receives a full week's pay, in view of the fact that the piece-work prices are adjusted too low.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The average profit on piece-work at

Mount Pleasant as compared with day-rates, works out at about 30 per cent.; and it does not appear, therefore, that the piece-work prices are adjusted too low. The number of men who have suffered a loss on their day-rates in any particular weeks during the past twelve months in connection with piece-work operations at the two factories is forty-five and their total losses amounted to £31 0s. 3½d. The total approximate value of piece-work performed in the same period was over £39,000, and those who sustained a loss in certain particular weeks earned on the average considerably more than their day-rate.

County Medical Officers of Health.

DR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any, and if any, which of the county councils in England and Wales, have not appointed a medical officer of health; whether any and if any, which county councils have appointed medical officers of health giving part time service to the duties of the office; and whether he has considered the advisability of initiating legislation requiring every county council to appoint a medical officer of health who shall not hold any other appointment or engage in private practice.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) According to the latest information in my possession there are thirty-two county councils who have not appointed a medical officer of health. The last Parliamentary Return on the subject (316 of 1904) shows that there were then twelve cases in which a county medical officer of health was not required to devote his whole time to his duties. I will send my hon. friend a list of the county councils above referred to. The matter to which he alludes in the last part of the Question is receiving my consideration.

Overcrowding at Renfrew Road Workhouse.

DR. COOPER: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been directed to the Report of the Workhouses Committee of the Lambeth Board of Guardians, stating that in the Renfrew Road Workhouse there were 141 beds above the certified accommodation, these beds being placed in the gangways of the dormitories, and in four of the dormitories the fire escape exits were blocked up with beds, and these exits could not be used; whether the accommodation is apportioned on a basis allowing a minimum amount of air space in respect of every person sleeping in the dormitory; whether he can state what is the air space per bed required by his Board, and the amount per bed in the overcrowded dormitories in the Renfrew Road Workhouse; whether he has any power to require the regulation amount of air space per bed being maintained; and, if so, what he intends to do in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I have seen the Report referred to. There is, I regret to say, considerable overcrowding in this workhouse, but I understand that all the beds but one have now been moved from positions close to the fire escape exits. Account is taken of the minimum air space in the dormitories in certifying the accommodation, and the air space required varies according to the class of inmate. In general the Board require: 300 cubic feet for each healthy person; 500 to 700 cubic feet for each infirm person; 850 cubic feet for each ordinary sick person; 1,200 cubic feet for each sick case of a special character. The actual accommodation for which the workhouse is certified in the present case is 1,221, but I understand that in the opinion of the medical officer the dormitory space would permit of a total of 1,264 persons. It is difficult to insist on the regulation amount of air space here at the present moment; but the guardians are using every effort to find accommodation elsewhere, and I am giving very careful attention to the matter.

Proceedings against Mr. Harry Persse.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any proceedings were instituted against Mr. Harry Persse, J.P., Woodville, Loughrea, by the Excise authorities in the year 1906 for having in his possession and using a gun without any authority to do so, and with what result; and whether Mr. Persse subsequently took out a gun licence.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) My right hon. friend the Chief Secretary has asked me to reply at the same time to the similar Question which the hon. Member addressed to him. I am informed that Mr. Persse was prosecuted, in April 1906, for killing game without a licence, and was fined £5. He subsequently took out a licence.

Administration of Charity of John Wild.

MR. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): To ask the hon. Member for the Elland Division, as representing the Charity Commissioners, if his attention has been called to the administration of a charity at Edmonton, in the county of Middlesex, left by John Wild in the year 1662 for the repairs of the parish church and for distribution to certain poor residents; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made to ascertain if the present proceeds of the charity are being used in accordance with the terms of the bequests.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) John Wild gave by his will certain property to trustees upon trust to apply the income as follows: £8 for educational purposes, £6 for apprenticing, £8 for almspeople and poor sick persons, £6 for ecclesiastical purposes, £2 for a poor person to let the water off the highways into the ditches, £3 for an audit dinner and for the trustees for their trouble, and the residue for the reparation of the parish church. The amount given for educational purposes is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Charity Commissioners, but is under that of the Board of Education. The fixed sums given for apprenticing and ecclesiastical purposes are still applicable for those purposes. The other fixed payments are applied under a scheme of the Commissioners of 18th July, 1902, with other funds, for almspeople and pensioners. The residue of the income of the charity is applied, according to the terms of the will, for the reparation of the parish church.

Exemption of Scottish Members of Parliament from Jury Service.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): To ask the Lord Advocate if he is aware that in Scotland Members of Parliament are liable to be summoned to serve on juries, though Peers and many other classes of the community, including the officers and men of the new Territorial force, are exempt from such service, and that in England Members of Parliament are exempt; and whether he will introduce legislation to remove this difference and so allow Scottish Members of Parliament to devote themselves uninterruptedly to the interests of the nation.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw.*) The fact appear to be as stated. In the Criminal Procedure Bill, which the Government propose to bring in on an early date, I am hopeful of introducing certain provisions for the Amendment of the Law as to juries in Scotland. This may afford an opportunity of redressing the grievance complained of by my hon. friend.

Increased Pay for Irish Sub-Postmasters.

MR. N. J. MURPHY (Kilkenny, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General, when sub-postmasters in Ireland may expect to receive an increase of salary and commission, as recommended by the Hobhouse Select Committee.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have arranged to receive a deputation from the National Federation of Sub-postmasters early next month, and I hope shortly after that meeting to make an announcement on the subject of the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants which affect sub-postmasters.

Purchase of Postal Orders Free of Poundage by Sailors.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the privilege long accorded to men employed on His Majesty's ships of war of purchasing postal orders at their face value, free of poundage or commission, has been withdrawn; and, if so, whether with a view to encouraging home remittances, he can see his way to restore the privilege.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The privileges of the Admiralty postal order service have not been withdrawn. In order, however, to prevent an abuse of that service, the purpose of which is to enable seamen on the high seas to make small remittances to their friends in this country, it has recently been arranged with the Admiralty that the amount of a single remittance shall not exceed £3 3s.

Pay of Postal Servants.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): To ask the Postmaster-General whether, in fixing the maximum pay for postmen at Leicester at 27s., he took into account the average wages paid to other workmen in the town; and whether, in reducing the postmen's maximum to 27s., he was aware that he was bringing them on a level with unskilled labourers.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) As I stated on the Supplementary Estimates, I have adopted the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee which deal with questions of remuneration. They recommend certain scales of wages for postmen, and they also recommended reclassification of all the towns for the purpose of assigning to each its proper scale of wage, on an uniform basis, following the classification for sorting clerks and telegraphists, as modified by the reduction of the number of classes. The actual position of each town was, therefore, to depend on two factors. First, the volume of work, and secondly, on the cost of living as ascertained by the Board of Trade. In the case of Leicester the number of units of work is 1,441, which brings it into Class 2, the limits of that class as regards volume of work being 800 to 1,700 units. The index number, representing the cost of living is ninety-three, the average being 100. Leicester, therefore, remains in Class 2, and comes under the scale recommended by the Committee for that class. It is obvious that a reclassification, such as that recommended by the Committee, must lead to some towns going up in class and some down in class. But, as I have already stated, any reduction in the scale of a class applies to new entrants only and not to existing members of the class. The cost of living is ascertained by the Board of Trade, and I receive their results. But I am willing to forward to them any representations which may be made to me to show that their estimate of the cost of living in any particular town is unduly low or high, and to these they will give consideration. As regards the question of the maximum, I would point out that the figure of 27s. quoted by the hon. Member is not the real remuneration received. To this must be added other advantages, such as boot allowance, Sunday pay, uniform, medical attendance, pension, etc., bringing the total value up to about 36s. Further a postman obtains if well-conducted, six good-conduct stripes, equivalent to 6s. a week. His total emoluments and privileges as a postman of Class 2 should, therefore, at their maximum, be valued not at 27s., but at about 42s. It must also be remembered that his employment is regular and permanent.

Training of Boy Artificers.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why boy artificers are being trained at such great cost whilst the number of applicants for the rating of engine-room artificer is in excess of requirements, and can be obtained at no cost to the taxpayers fully equipped for the duties likely to devlove upon them

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The system of boy artificers was established by the Admiralty of 1903 in order to obtain an alternative source of supply to that by direct entry from the shore, which is fluctuating and uncertain. The two systems were meant to run concurrently, and more than half the number required next year will be entered direct from the shore.

Vacancies for Engine Room Artificers.

MR. BARNES: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the eleven appointments of engine-room artificers, reported to the House in June last as being vacant out of 248 allowed to certain ships and establishments, have been filled up; and what others of the total number are now vacant, and is it proposed to fill them with mechanicians.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The Answer to the first Question is in the affirmative. There are four vacancies fo engine-room artificers in the submarine service, but volunteers to fill these vacancies have already been selected and will join on 1st March. The Answer to the third Question is in the negative.

Irish Land Finances.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer when he now expects to make a statement to the House in reference to the finances of The Land Act, 1903 (Ireland).

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am not yet in a position to make a statement on the subject, but I hope to be able to do so at an early date.

Assistance for the Cultivation of Beet Sugar.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if, having regard to the fact that beetroot sugar to the value of over £16,000,000 was consumed in the United Kingdom in the past year, he would be prepared to assist the persons proposing to put up factories in Suffolk and Lincolnshire for the manufacture of beet sugar by giving them the assurance that an Excise duty will not be imposed on the sugar they may produce, at any rate for a term of years.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) No, Sir.

The Hop Industry Inquiry.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can now state the reference and the composition of the Select Committee on the Hop industry, which he offered during the debate on the Address, as the need for prompt action is extremely urgent.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am not able to make a statement at the present moment, but I hope that my right hon. friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury will be in a position to move for the appointment of the Committee at an early date.

Glanders.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his attention has been called to the report of the inquest on James Shaw who died on 8th February from glanders, and to the evidence which stated that deaths of human beings from this disease were much more frequent than was supposed; and whether he will now make a grant to the local authorities of the country from the National Exchequer in order to facilitate the stamping out of this terrible scourge to man and beast.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I have seen accounts of the case referred to in the public Press. Under the new Order, which came into operation on the 1st proximo, the disease is now being dealt with much more effectively than in the past, and I trust that the steps which are being taken will prove efficacious in stamping it out altogether. The statutory duty of dealing with the matter rests with the local authorities, and the efficiency of the measures taken has no direct connection with the question of incidence of charge as between local and Imperial funds. This latter question must be considered on its merits in connection with the relations of local and national finance generally.

Bonuses and Income-Tax.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, if income-tax is paid by employers on profits estimated before bonuses are distributed to the heads of their departments, the tax is again exigible when these employees are presented with the bonuses.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) Bonuses paid to employees are usually deducted as a business expense in estimating the assessable profits of the employer. If, however, the Board of Inland Revenue are satisfied that the employer has paid the tax himself the practice is not to charge the bonus again in the hands of the recipient.

Productions and Imports of Yeast.

MR. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will give a Return shewing the quantity of yeast produced in the distilleries of the United Kingdom, and the quantity imported annually for the last five years.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) There are no official statistics of the quantity of yeast made in this country. The quantities imported annually are shown in the published Customs Returns.

MR. LEA: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he is aware of the fact that the provisions of Section 14, Sub-section 5, of the Act 61 and 62 Vict., c. 46, hamper the progress of the yeast industry in the United Kingdom by restricting the proportion of yeast which distillers may separate from their wash; and if he will see that the percentage of yeast which distillers may separate be raised from 15 to 20 on the whole wort brewed in the brewing period.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am not aware that the present restrictions with regard to the removal of yeast from the wash by distillers hamper the progress of the industry. If, however, a representation were made by the general body of yeast distillers in favour of a relaxation of the law, the matter would be considered.

Distilling Regulations.

MR. LEA: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he is aware that distillers are prevented from distilling until a certain interval of time has elapsed from the end of the brewing period; whether, in consequence of this delay distillers possessing ripe wash sustain additional loss by way of acetification, etc.; and will he state what object is served by the enforcement of this regulation, and the number of instances of fraud on the Revenue brought to light within the last ten years by the application of this restriction.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The replies to the first and third questions were contained in my Answer to a Question which the hon. Member asked on the 6th inst. As regards the second Question, it is possible that in some cases this may occur to a very limited extent. As regards the fourth question, no instances of fraud have occurred in the last ten years.

Extra Police at Gort.

MR. DUFFY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, how many policemen are stationed in the town of Gort; how many of them are classified as extra police, and will any portion of the cost be charged to the local rates; and, having regard to the peaceful state of the town, will he consider the advisability of withdrawing the extra force.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The number of policemen at present stationed at Gort is 42, which includes a district inspector and two head constables. Twenty-six of these are extra police, in respect of whom the statutory charge will be made against the county council to be levied off the county at large. The present state of the district of Gort is not such as would justify the withdrawal of the extra force.

Sale of the Butson Estate, County Galway.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the sale of the Butson estate, county Galway, has been completed; and, if not, can he say when it may be.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Butson estate, county Galway, is for sale in the Land Judge's Court. The question of purchasing it under Section 7 of the Act of 1903 has been under the consideration of the Estates Commissioners, who hope to make an offer to the Land Judge for the whole estate at an early date.

Purchase of the Estate of the late Captain Segrave, County Galway.

MR. JOHN ROCHE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Estates Commissioners have entered into negotiations for the purchase of the estate of the late Captain Segrave, in the county of Galway; and, if so, whether the sale is likely to be completed in the near future.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners approached Captain Segrave upon the subject of his untenanted land, and were informed by him that the untenanted land in his possession formed part of his demense. No proceedings for the purchase of

Captain Segrave's estate have yet been instituted before the Commissioners.

Purchase of Untenanted Land in County Leitrim.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state whether the Estates Commissioners have purchased any untenanted land in County Leitrim since the passing of the Land Act of 1903; and, if so, from whom it was purchased, the quantity purchased, and the price paid for the same.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners have purchased untenanted land in County Leitrim from one proprietor, namely, Miss M. A. Crofton. The land, which consisted principally of mountain land, comprises 1,229 acres, and the price paid for it was £248.

Ballinamore and Ballyconnell Navigation Rate.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he has received from the County Leitrim County Council a copy of a resolution passed by them at their meeting, held on 12th February, protesting against the payment of £42 12*s.* 5*d.* in connection with the Ballinamore and Ballyconnell navigation district; and, as there is no navigation whatever in this district, if steps will be taken to prevent the trustees of this so-called navigation district from levying in future this rate on an already over-taxed district, particularly when no benefit accrues to the people from it.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The navigation of the Ballinamore and Ballyconnell Canal was abandoned in 1865 owing to the absence of trade. The canal is not now maintained for navigation, but there is some necessary expenditure for other purposes, such as the protection of property liable to be injured by neglect of the navigation works. This expenditure must be met by the counties of Leitrim, Cavan, Roscommon, and Fermanagh in the proportions assigned by the award made on the completion of the navigation scheme. The case of the canal and the question of its improvement for drainage or navigation purposes have been brought before the Royal Commission on Canals and Waterways, and any recommendation which the Commission may make regarding it will, of course, receive full consideration.

Evicted Tenants—Application of Patrick Phelan.

MR. N. J. MURPHY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that an evicted tenant named Patrick Phelan, of Newchurch, County Kilkenny, made application to the Estates Commissioners for reinstatement in his original holding, which holding is still untenanted; and whether the Estates Commissioners have refused to entertain his application; and, if so, on what grounds.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners have received from Patrick Phelan an application for reinstatement, and have had inquiries made into the matter. The Commissioners are informed that the farm formerly held by the applicant is at present used by the landlord in connection with his demesne. After full consideration of all the circumstances the Commissioners have decided to take no action in the case.

Eviction of Timothy Murphy.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork, County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a resolution from the Millstreet Rural District Council condemning the action of Messrs. Thompson and Orpen in persisting with the eviction of Timothy Murphy, of Collykerane, a future tenant, after excluding him, through a technicality, from availing of the benefits of the Irish Land Commission, and calling upon the Government to refuse the assistance of the forces of the Crown in carrying out this eviction, particularly as Mr. Murphy made a most reasonable offer with a view to the purchase of his holding; and whether he intends to accede to the request of the district council as herein set forth.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Resolution has been received. The Government have no knowledge of the merits of the case in question; but, in any event, if a decree for eviction should be obtained, it would not be legal for the Executive Government to refuse the assistance of the forces of the Crown for the protection of the sheriff when engaged in the execution of the King's writ.

Evicted Tenants—Restoration of Edward O'Brien.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners propose to exercise the compulsory powers vested in them to restore Edward O'Brien to his former holding on the estate of Mr. J. H. Nichoson, Balrath, Kells, County Meath; and it not, what is their objection to doing so.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners are not prepared to answer this Question at the present stage. As the hon. Member has already been informed, the case has been referred to an inspector with the object of providing O'Brien with a holding. Upon receipt of the inspector's Report, the Commissioners will consider what further steps they should take in the matter.

Evicted Tenants—Case of James Gore.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners, before finally deciding that the whole farm from which James Gore was evicted on the estate of R. B. Balfour, Rathkenny, County Meath, would be too large for him, will take into account the assistance which his family and relatives are prepared to give him in the cultivation of the land.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that before coming to a decision in this case they will fully consider all the circumstances including the fact stated in the Question.

Purchase of Untenanted Land in County Limerick.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners are taking any action towards the purchase of untenanted lands in the county of Limerick; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have approached 106 owners of untenanted lands in the county of Limerick. Of these six have agreed to have their lands inspected in order that the Commissioners may estimate the prices which they could offer, and seventy-seven have expressed their unwillingness to sell. In nine cases the owners have not definitely stated their wishes in the matter, and in the remaining fourteen cases replies have not yet been received. In addition, proceedings for sale have been instituted before the Commissioners in the case of sixteen estates in the county which contain untenanted land.

Writers at the Army Clothing Factory.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that writers in the Army Clothing Department are doing work formerly performed by civil servants, but that they (the writers) are not entitled to a pension as their predecessors were; and will he consider their case for pension rights.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Certain of the Second Division clerks in the Army Clothing Department have been replaced by foreman writers. Foreman writers are entitled to pensions. No Civil Service clerks have been replaced by writers.

Inland Revenue Returns and National Prosperity.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that the Commissioners of Inland Revenue reported in 1903 that it is by the figures of gross income that national prosperity is to be measured; and whether he can give the figures of gross income for the United Kingdom in 1897 and the latest available date.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George*). The statement referred to relates to the relative value as a test of national prosperity of the gross amount of incomes brought under the review of the Inland

Revenue Department for purposes of income-tax assessment and the net income on which income-tax was received. It does not relate to the gross national income, of which no official particulars are available. The gross amount so brought under review in the financial year commencing 1st April, 1897, was, as stated in the Reports of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, £734,461,246, whilst for the financial year commencing 1st April, 1905, the latest year for which the information is available, the corresponding figure was £925,184,556.

The "Kilmorack."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesborough): To ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether his Department has received a copy of a letter from one of the crew of the Glasgow steamer "Kilmorack"; whether he is aware that the firemen allege that the vessel is undermanned in consequence of there being too many fires to attend to for the number of men employed; whether he is aware that the men allege that the master has failed to provide them with the necessary provisions as contained in the provision scale of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906; whether he is aware that the men allege that the boilers of the "Kilmorack" are defective and that there has been some tampering with the steam guage; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made into these allegations at once, as the vessel is due to arrive at Ardrossan on or about the 22nd or 23rd of this month.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I have no information in the case referred to in the Question, but inquiries are being made, and the result shall be communicated to my hon. friend as soon as possible.

Telephone Rates in England and Norway.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPS (Southampton): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the approximate average annual cost for a telephone installation in a house 100 miles from London when within a telephone exchange area and outside such area but within three miles of an exchange, respectively, and the charge for a call to London in each case; and what are the approximate corresponding charges for a like service in the kingdom of Norway.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The minimum charge at small post office provincial exchanges is £5 a year for an exclusive line, and £4 4s. a year for a two-party line. The calls of subscribers very seldom exceed the minimum numbers allowed for these sums. These rates cover connections within one mile of an exchange. An additional charge of £1 5s. per quarter mile, measured radially, is made for extra distances. In Norway the charges for an independent circuit in places outside Christiania vary from £2 4s. to £3 18s. a year, but there are usually entrance fees also to be paid, and additional payments have to be made for double wire circuits. The radius is less than one mile. Beyond this radius subscribers pay the capital cost of constructing their lines. There are also additional charges for maintenance of lines outside the radius, and in some cases subscribers provide and maintain their own instruments. I cannot say exactly what the cost would be of a circuit to a place three miles from an exchange. It must be remembered that in Norway materials and labour are much cheaper than in England, that the standard of construction is much simpler and less costly, and that there are fewer wayleave difficulties. The cost of a trunk call to London from a place 100 miles distant would be 1s. In Norway the corresponding charge would be 9½d. for the ordinary service, but about 2s. 4d. for an urgent call. Ordinary calls take effect only when there are no urgent calls on hand. In rural districts the users of trunk lines have to find office room and attendance free for the Government.

Inadequate Accommodation at Margate Post Office.

MR. H. H. MARKS: To ask the Postmaster-General, whether he has received complaints that the present head post office for the borough of Margate is quite inadequate to deal with the requirements of the town, particularly in the summer months; and whether he can hold out any hope that the demand for a more commodious building will be favourably considered.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) A scheme for providing a more commodious building has already been sanctioned, and it is hoped to commence operations in a few months time.

Postal Deliveries at Churchill and Letterkenny.

MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General, whether he has received a memorial from the inhabitants of Churchill, Letterkenny, and surrounding districts, praying for a Sunday delivery and a daily mid-day delivery of letters; and whether he is now able to give effect to the wishes of the memorialists.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have received the memorial referred to; but, as I explained to the hon. Member in December last, the postal service in the district in question is already being carried on at a loss, and I should not be justified in incurring additional expense for the provision of the improvements desired.

Irish Historical Manuscripts.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what Irish historical manuscripts are now engaging the attention of the Historical Manuscripts Commission; and when they propose to publish them.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that two collections of manuscripts which may be regarded as specifically Irish are now engaging the attention of the Commission. These are—1. The MSS. of the Marquess of Ormonde, Vol. VI. of which is almost completed at press, and will, it is hoped, be issued before the end of the session. 2. The MSS. of the Earl of Egmont, Vol. 2 of which is also at press, but is not so far advanced. There are also, I understand, Irish papers in the Eyre-Matcham MSS., the Knox MSS., and the Calendar of Cecil MSS., but I am unable to say when they will be published.

Fireproofing of National Gallery Extension.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): To ask the First Commissioner of Works, what firm is being employed to do the fireproofing of the National Gallery extension; and whether the design and estimate were submitted to competition.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) In the National Gallery extension there will not be any special contract for fireproofing. Reinforced concrete construction for both roofs and floors will be employed, and the work will form part of the ordinary building contract.

Imprisoned Women Suffragists.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what number of women have gone to prison during 1908 in consequence of disorderly conduct in Downing Street, Parliament Square, or other places and buildings thereabouts; how many of such persons have been discharged on promise of good behaviour; how many have served their sentences; and how many are now in gaol.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The total number of such persons received into prison in 1908 is seventy-two. Of these sixteen have been released on entering into recognisance to be of good behaviour, and three on payment of their fines, five have served their sentences, and forty-eight are now in prison.

Increase of Factory Inspection Staff.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the date of the last increase in the number of the staff of male and female inspectors, respectively, and assistant inspectors of factories and workshops, and what was the extent of the increase in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The last increase was in 1906, when four junior inspectors, four inspector's assistants, and three lady inspectors were added to the staff.

Accident at Messrs. Atkinson Brothers' Works at Sheffield.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the death of a boy, Ernest Helliwell, fourteen years of age, who, while standing in front of the fire was struck by a flying piece of a bursting grindstone at Messrs. Atkinson Brothers' grinding wheel in Sheffield on 30th January last; whether the grindstone was running in front of the fireplace; and, if so, whether the requirements of the law were carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone*) I have made inquiry into this case, and from the report which I have received it appears that the grindstone which caused the accident was not running before the fireplace in the sense in which the words "before any fireplace" in the seventh paragraph of the Third Schedule to the Factory Act have always been interpreted, *i.e.*, within the space between lines drawn at right angles to the wall from each edge of the fireplace. No breach of the Act has therefore been committed.

Navigation of the River Avon between Christchurch and Salisbury.

MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been directed to steps which are being taken by a certain riparian owner to stop the free navigation of the River Avon between Christchurch and Salisbury; whether the Act of 16 and 17 Car. 2, c. 12, still remains in force; and what steps, if any, he will take to protect the rights of the Crown and the public in the free navigation of the Avon.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson.*) My attention has not been directed to this matter except by my hon. friend's Question. It is for the parties or authorities affected by the alleged obstruction to take proceedings, if they decide to do so, by way of action. The matter will probably come before me on an application for my fiat, which I shall be glad to consider.

Post Office Savings Bank.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that in each of the last five years there has been a deficiency in the income account of the Post Office Savings Bank, varying from £88,000 to £119,000; whether a valuation of the assets of the Post Office Savings Bank Fund at market values would disclose a deficiency of more than £10,000,000 in the capital account; whether, seeing that the taxpayers year by year make good the deficiency in the capital account, he will consider the advisability of giving full official information as to the financial position of the Post Office Savings Bank, and, if a valuation of the assets at market prices is held to be misleading, will he devise some other method by which the taxpayers may be informed as to the financial position of the institution.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The deficiencies on the income account of the Post Office Savings Bank Fund in the last few years have been as stated in the Question. I am unable to say what would be the result of a valuation of the assets of the fund at current market prices, because the practice of publishing such a valuation has been discontinued under the Savings Bank Act, 1904, in pursuance of the recommendation of the Select Committee of 1902, who described that method of valuation as misleading. It is impossible in the nature of things to devise any method of valuation which would show whether any burden will hereafter fall upon the Exchequer in respect of the capital liabilities of the Post Office Savings Banks and, if so, the amount of that burden. everything depends upon the dates at which it may be necessary to realise the securities on behalf of the fund and on the prices which may then be obtainable for those securities, things which cannot be foreseen.

Criminal Cases disposed of by European Collector Magistrates in India.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for India whether, without imposing undue labour upon the authorities in India, it would be possible to obtain a rough approximation of the proportion of the criminal work, original and appellate, disposed of by district and other magistrates in whose case revenue and magisterial functions are combined, and of the proportion of such work disposed of by magistrates who do not exercise revenue and other administrative powers; and whether he will consider the desirability of obtaining such information, in view of the fact that a very small proportion of the criminal work is in fact disposed of by the European collector magistrates.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Morley.*) I will ask the Government of India whether they can supply the desired information without undue labour.

Irish Land Purchase—Application for Grant.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners can give any assistance to Miss Bridget Leahy, of Inchincummer, county Kerry, a purchasing tenant on the estate of Major Gordon Leahy, who is without any stock.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estate Commissioners inform me that they cannot trace the name of Bridget Leahy as that of a purchasing tenant on the estate referred to.

Compensation for Criminal Injury in Ireland.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he proposes to take steps this session to amend the Law in Ireland as regards compensation for criminal injury claims.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The reply is in the negative.

Navigation Works on the North East Coast of Ireland.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the Government propose to introduce their Bill to facilitate the construction of marine works on the North-East Coast of Ireland; and whether in that Bill further financial assistance will be given to those county councils who contribute towards the construction of such works.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) My right hon. friend informed the hon. Baronet on the 17th instant that the possibility of introducing legislation on the lines of the Navigation Works Bill was under consideration. It would be not possible at present to say when such legislation could be introduced. The contemplated measure would not impose further burdens on the Exchequer.

Irrecoverable Rates.

MR. DUFFY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Galway County Council issued circulars to rate collectors of the county on 6th November, 1907, requesting them to forward claims for refunds of irrecoverable rates under Article 92 of the Public Bodies Order of 1904, and that a promise was given last year that precautions would be taken by which rate collectors would suffer no hardship through the enforcement of the Public Bodies Order; and whether, seeing that irrecoverable amounts lodged for the half-year ending 30th September last to the credit of the county council have not yet been refunded, he will give instructions to have collectors promptly refunded irrecoverable amounts and paid their poundage in future without unnecessary delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer to his Question of 9th May, 1907 on this subject. The Local Government Board inform me that it is the fact that the Galway County Council issued circulars calling attention to the rules regarding irrecoverable rates, as stated in the first part of the Question. The county secretary has stated that he is not aware that any promise on the subject was made to the rate collectors. The Local Government Board are not prepared to give the council any such instructions as are suggested in the Question. Under the council's management the collection of the rates in the county has this year been most satisfactory, and in the circumstances the Board will not interfere with the council's arrangements, or do anything to lessen their authority over the collectors.

Government Grant for Irish Primary Education.

MR. BARRIE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of

Ireland whether he has received a resolution from the Coleraine National Teachers' Association relative to the proposed Government grant for Irish primary education; and when he hopes to make a statement to the House on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) This matter is under my right hon. friend's consideration. He cannot say at present when it will be possible to make a statement on the subject.

Congestion of Business at County Dublin County Court.

MR. BARRIE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience caused to litigants at the county Dublin County Court held at Kilmainham, owing to the sittings there being so arranged that the cases cannot be disposed of and are adjourned from one sitting to another; and if the Recorder of Dublin, as County Court Judge for county Dublin, has not time consistently with the discharge of his duties in the city of Dublin to hear the cases at Kilmainham, will the Lord-Chancellor appoint a deputy to dispose of the arrears now long pending at Kilmainham, and make some arrangement to enable future cases at the court to be properly heard.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I understand that several defended civil cases at Kilmainham were adjourned from the last January sessions to the March sessions. The adjournment was unavoidable owing to the want of time to complete the sessions at Kilmainham, arising from the necessity for opening the sittings in Green Street for criminal and civil business. I understand that under the existing arrangement, having regard to the very large number of sessions which the Recorder holds both in the city and county, it has not been found practicable to arrange the sittings so as to avoid the necessity for such occasional adjournments. But I am informed that it is intended to apply to the Privy Council for liberty to hear the Kilmainham civil business in Green Street Courthouse, with the object of expediting the hearing and disposal of such cases. The Recorder sits almost continuously during the year, and has a very extensive jurisdiction. The power of appointing a deputy is regulated by statute, and only extends to cases of illness or unavoidable absence.

Purchase of Estate of Mrs. G. C. P. Mahon of Stokestown.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many of the 172 agreements lodged by Mrs. Grace C. P. Mahon, Stokestown, county Roscommon, with the Estates Commissioners on 25th April, 1906, are applications for an advance in respect of holdings not in the occupation of the applicants; is he aware that there are upwards of eighty tenants on this estate who have not been allowed to sign purchase agreements, and that middlemen are receiving benefits in their payments as interest on the agreed purchase money of holdings not in their occupation, which the law does not entitle them to purchase; whether he is aware that middlemen on this estate are not allowing their sub-tenants any reduction in their rents, but are persecuting them by having processes served for half-year's rents, and that agreements have been lodged for advances at twenty-five years purchase of non-judicial rents; and whether, having regard to the hardships imposed on a number of the tenants on this estate, he will ask the Estates Commissioners to have an immediate inspection made or suggest some remedy for the redress of such grievances.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that 470 purchase agreements in all have been lodged with them in respect of the estate in question. The agreements have not yet been analysed nor has the estate been inspected, and the Commissioners are therefore unable to say in how many cases applications have been made for advances in respect of holdings not in the occupation of the tenants, or how many sub-tenants there are on the estate, or whether any of the agreements lodged are for advances at twenty-five years purchase of judicial rents. The Commissioners, moreover, have no knowledge of any dealings between the middlemen and their subtenants. In order to obtain complete information upon these various points at once it would be necessary to direct an inspection of the estate out of its order of priority, and the Commissioners, after full consideration, do not see any sufficient reason for adopting that course. The case of this estate will be dealt with in its proper turn.

Purchase of the Estate of Mr. Arthur O'Connor.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the reason why the agreement of the tenants to purchase their holdings on the estate of Arthur M. O'Connor, Esq., the Palace, Elphin, county Roscommon, fell through after the matter had been in the hands of the Commissioners for three and a half years; and whether there is any prospect of the question of the sale and purchase of the estate being reopened.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) In the case of the estate referred to in the Question, the Estates Commissioners were of opinion that the turbary in the owner's hands should be divided amongst the tenants who required the same. To this course the owner would not agree. Moreover, the Commissioners refused to make the advances applied for certain of the cases, such advances being in excess of the amounts for which the holdings would, in the Commissioners opinion, afford security, and the owner declined to sell the holdings at the sums which the Commissioners were prepared to advance. The Commissioners accordingly refused to declare the lands to be an estate, and the agreements for purchase were dismissed. The Commissioners are not aware whether the owner intends to approach them with a view to reopening the question of the sale of his estate.

Purchase of Farms at Lacken and Tromore, County Roscommon.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether negotiations are now going on between the Estates Commissioners and the landlords of the farms, Lacken (estate of W. F. B. Handcock) and Tromore (estate of Major Lloyd), both in county Roscommon, for the purchase of the said farms for distribution amongst the holders of non-economic holdings in the neighbourhood; if so, whether he can state when the negotiations are likely to be brought to a close; whether he can state how many other non-residential farms there are in the same district; and what action, if any the Commissioners propose to take with regard to them, in view of the desire which exists on the part of the people to secure possession on fair terms of economica holdings in the locality.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners are at present negotiating for the purchase of the estate of W. F. D. Hancock, county Roscommon, including the farm of Lacken, but are not in a position to say when the negotiations are likely to be completed. The Commissioners are unable to identify proceedings in respect of the farm of Tromore referred to in the Question, and are not aware what other non-residential farms may be situated in the district in question. In pursuance of Regulation V. the Commissioners are engaged in making inquiries with the object of acquiring untenanted land throughout the country generally.

Deposit of Refuse on Vacant Ground at Shore Road, Belfast.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Belfast Corporation is at present filling up vacant ground opposite Seaview, Shore Road, Belfast, with filthy refuse; whether the medical officer of the district, Dr. Ferguson reported to the Corporation that the depositing of this filthy rubbish was dangerous to the health of residents in the vicinity; whether the Corporation have refused to take any action either to discontinue or to mitigate the nuisance complained of; and whether, in view of the high death-rate in Belfast, he will order the Local Government Board to take immediate steps to protect the health of the residents affected.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Local Government Board have referred this Question to the town clerk of Belfast who has informed them, in reply, that the medical officer of health and the city surveyor have examined the place referred to in the Question, and found nothing there but ordinary street sweepings and a small quantity of horse manure which had apparently been swept off a car stand. The town clerk adds that action had been taken in the matter before Dr Ferguson reported, and that no nuisance exists at the place.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Black Watch Volunteer Battalions.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what reductions are contemplated with regard to the Volunteer battalions of the Black Watch under the new Territorial Army scheme.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): As I have already explained to the House in reply to similar Questions, I am not yet in a position to give any detailed information of the character required by the Question. The Question is founded on a misconception.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Are not the Associations directed to produce a certain number of men, and are they not, therefore, obliged to make a certain reduction ?

MR. HALDANE: Yes, certainly.

Shambles Barracks, Galway.

MR. GWYNN (Galway): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government has concluded any sale of the old Shambles Barracks in Galway, which was offered for sale by private tender last year; and whether his attention has been called to the annual cost in rates and upkeep of two virtually disused barracks in the county.

MR. HALDANE: No sale of the old Shambles Barracks in Galway has been concluded. The negotiations for sale have been suspended as it is possible that the barracks may be required for War Department purposes, as more accommodation may be required for the Special Reserve. A decision will be arrived at shortly.

MR. GWYNN: Is it proposed to rebuild these barracks or to utilise the space on which they stand ?

MR. HALDANE: I cannot say. The decision will be arrived at very shortly.

Officers of the Militia Submarine Miners.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when will the decision of the War Office be made known regarding the case of the officers of the Submarine Miners (Militia) Royal Engineers, it now being nearly twelve months since the War Office called for a list of those desirous of being retained; and whether these officers were not permitted to attend courses of instruction or to be trained in any way during 1907, although a sum of £1,000 was voted for their training (Appendix 5, page 179, of the Army Estimates for 1907–8).

MR. HALDANE: A Royal Warrant will shortly be issued dealing with Special Reserve officers. Suitable officers of the Submarine Miners (Militia) Royal Engineers will be asked to join the Special Reserve of officers. As regards training in 1907, it must be remembered that the whole question of the organisation of the reserve of officers was under consideration, and it was held that pending a decision on the main question it was undesirable to train these particular officers who were no longer required for submarine mining.

Volunteers and the Conditions of Enlistment.

MR. PARTINGTON (Derbyshire, High Peak): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, looking to the fact that the proposed changes of enlistment and liabilities under the Territorial Forces Act are regarded in many quarters with dissatisfaction, he will consider the advisability of allowing Volunteers to continue their service for one year, so that they may have a longer period in which to see how the new conditions will affect them.

MR. HALDANE: My hon. friend is evidently unaware that while units of the Volunteers will be transferred to the Territorial Forces on 31st March, when the new system takes the place of the old, individual ex-Volunteers will be given up to 30th June to decide whether they are willing to accept the new conditions of service. I think my hon. friend will agree with me that this date will give them ample time to understand the new terms of service.

Thanksgiving Church Parade.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): On behalf of the right hon. Member for Croydon, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the War Office circular, dated 28th January, and addressed to lords-lieutenant of counties, and containing a suggestion by the Secretary of State that a special parade of the Territorial Army should take place on 5th April next, for the purpose of giving thanks to Almighty God for the patriotic spirit which has hitherto imbued the Yeomanry and Volunteers, to ask the blessing of God on the Territorial Force and on the men who are to direct and compose it, and to offer the prayers of the nation for the continuance of the blessings of peace, has been followed by the issue of an order for the parade referred to; and whether it is proposed that such a parade shall in fact take place.

MR. BLACK (Bedfordshire, Biggleswade) was understood to ask, as we cannot claim to have a monopoly of the Almighty's favour, would it not be better to have kept His name out of the question.

MR. HALDANE: I think that would involve dissociating all religion from the Army and Navy. As the suggested Church Parade is a purely voluntary one, no order will be issued from the War Office on the subject. Although 5th April was proposed as a suitable date, the parade, if considered desirable by Associations and the Commanders of units, may be held at such times and places as the various local conditions render advisable. The suggestion is that of the Chaplain-General on behalf of the chaplains of all denominations, made with my full assent and approval, but as a suggestion merely. Complete liberty is left to the Associations as to whether they will adopt it.

Reduction of the Volunteer Force.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Onbe half of the right hon. Member for Croydon, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what has been the net reduction of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, respectively, of the Volunteer Force, since 1st October, 1905.

MR. HALDANE: The difference between the figures of 1st October, 1905, and 1st January, 1908, amounts to seventy-one officers and 12,800 men. The right hon. Gentleman will doubtless recollect that there is always a considerable diminution of the Volunteer Force in the month of October.

Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War with respect to Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers transferring into the Territorial Army, how many drills will be required by recruits and trained men, respectively; and what will be the minimum attendance required in camp each year.

MR. HALDANE: The number of drills which recruits of the Territorial Garrison Artillery will be required to attend will be forty-five, as for the present Volunteers. They will also attend camp unless excused by the General Officer Commanding. Trained soldiers of the Territorial Garrison Artillery will be required to attend twenty drills annually in addition to the annual training in camp which will be from eight to fifteen days. A pamphlet setting forth the requirements of training for all arms will be issued shortly.

MR. FELL: When will it be available?

MR. HALDANE: I hope in a few days.

Woolwich Ordnance Factories.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the average number of men employed in the Ordnance Factories at Woolwich in the year 1898 was 15,293, and at the present time less than 9,000, whilst the expenditure on the Army and Navy in the past year exceeded the expenditure in 1898 by £15,000,000.

Mr. HALDANE: The figures for 1898, quoted by the hon. Member, include the numbers in the Building Works Department and the Central Office. The corresponding figures at the present time amount to over 11,000. The figures given in regard to Army and Navy expenditure are approximately correct.

Mr. FELL asked whether there was a considerable reduction in the output of materials of war, or whether there was a great accumulation in hand.

Mr. HALDANE: There is a very considerable diminution in the demand for munitions of war. We get from this establishment as much as we want and more with the numbers now employed.

Territorial Army Field Batteries.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what are the special duties which field batteries of the Territorial Army are expected to perform in the event of an invasion; and in what particulars do they differ from the duties to be performed in war by field batteries of the Regular Army.

Mr. HALDANE: The duties required of field batteries of the Territorial Force in the event of an invasion differ in no respect from those of the Regular Field Army.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): When does the hon. Member expect the invader? Who is to be the invader? Is it the German Emperor?

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the opinion of the Army Council that Territorial field batteries, armed with guns inferior in range, accuracy, rapidity of fire, weight of projectile, and number of bullets in shrapnel shell, and manned by a comparatively untrained *personnel* can properly be placed in the field against the modern quick-firing batteries and highly-trained *personnel* of a Continental regular army.

Mr. HALDANE: The hon. Member is introducing into a Question matter that can only properly be dealt with in debate and would better be raised on Army Estimates. I may, however, point out that it was necessary to make a start in arming the Territorial Force with guns and that there was a large stock of 15-pounder guns available. These are good guns, nearly equal to the Field Artillery of some of the greatest Continental Powers in range, muzzle velocity, and weight of projectile. They have fewer bullets in the shrapnel than the 18-pounder, but on the other hand, they are mobile and better adapted for use in an enclosed and wooded terrain such as the Territorial Army would generally operate in. I may observe that, notwithstanding the great knowledge of the hon. Member, I doubt whether he has applied his mind to the artillery conditions which would obtain in regard to the operations of an invading force coming to these islands. The ground for the most part would be wooded and enclosed, and if the hon. Member would refer to the valuable book of Colonel Caldwell on the tactics of home defence, it is the fortieth chapter I think, he would see why it is absolutely vital for such a purpose that the artillery should be of the most mobile character, with the range of the guns necessarily short.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman wished the House to understand that the gun which he proposed to arm the Territorial Army with was to be more suitable for the conditions of war in England than the guns which would be brought against us.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: We are not at war; we are at peace.

Mr. HALDANE: I do not know what the hon. Member is driving at. Suppose you compare the German with the English guns, which is what is probably in the hon. Gentleman's mind. The 15-pounder gun has a muzzle velocity of 1,581 feet as against the German muzzle velocity of 1,525 feet. The effective range of the 15-pounder gun is 5,900 as against 5,500 with the German gun. The number of bullets in the shrapnel is slightly less. It is 230 against 300 on the German side, and the weight of the projectile is 14 lb. as against 15 lb.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Hear, hear! The Empire is safe.

Volunteer Battalion Debts.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government will assume the debts and expenses properly incurred by the various battalions of Volunteers, and which their remaining funds on 31st March next are insufficient to discharge, and including the repayment of any moneys they may have had to borrow from their bankers; whether the same assumption will equally apply to those battalions which may be disbanded by the War Office; whether the Government will take over the drill halls and armouries connected with the Volunteer Force, and repay any moneys which may be due in respect to such buildings; and whether, in the event of the Government declining to assume any such debts, the commanding officer, or any other members of the corps, will be held to be responsible.

MR. HALDANE: A special grant will be made from Army funds where necessary to commanding officers of Yeomanry and Volunteer corps, which are to be transferred to the Territorial Force or disbanded, sufficient to enable them to discharge all liabilities on the public funds of the corps which have been properly incurred and cannot be met from credit balances remaining on 31st March, 1908, except loans which have been raised for purposes contemplated in the Military Lands Acts, and are secured on corps property. The drill halls and armouries which are corps property, acquired under the Military Lands and other Acts, will, in the case of corps passing into the Territorial Force, be transferred to County Associations, together with any mortgage secured on them. The property of disbanded corps will, as provided under the Military Lands Acts, vest in the Secretary of State subject to repayment of money borrowed for its purchase, etc. Property vested in trustees for the benefit of corps will be dealt with as the circumstances of each case demand.

In reply to a further Question,

MR. HALDANE said it was exceedingly difficult to distinguish between money voluntarily subscribed locally for drill halls and the Government contributions, in cases where five-sixths of the money was public money, but in cases where the drill hall had been bought from voluntary funds it would remain private property. It would only be taken over by the County Association when it had been made absolutely the property of the corps.

Yeomanry Horses.

LORD BALCARRES: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Medway Division of Kent, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether members of the Yeomanry will, under Territorial Army regulations, continue to be allowed to provide their own horses for annual trainings, receiving as hitherto an allowance for doing so.

MR. HALDANE: A grant of £5 per horse is made to County Associations for the provision of horses; and in the case of officers or men riding their own horses, the £5 will be paid over to the officer or man on the same terms as those on which the Association receives it.

COLONEL SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would consider the possibility of instructing the Government to continue to pay compensation for the loss of horses when on service, as in previous years, instead of laying the loss on the men.

MR. HALDANE: That is a question of policy, which I must consider.

COLONEL SEELY asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would take into consideration that it was much cheaper for the Government to insure all the horses than it was for a private individual or an Association.

Colonel HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.) asked whether the yeoman would get the £5 in full or less the cost of insuring. Could not the Government take any responsibility for insurance?

Mr. HALDANE said that the provision of horses was left to the Association. The Government furnished the money, the amount of the grant being £5, and the Association would then take steps with regard to insurance if it thought right to do so. The Government never insured; it was very bad business for the Government to insure.

Army Reservists Abroad.

Lord BALCARRES: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Medway Division of Kent, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any, and, if so, what, limit has been set upon the number of Army Reservists who may receive permission to reside abroad and in the Colonies.

Mr. HALDANE: No limit has been fixed. The return showing the number of reservists residing abroad and in the Colonies is reviewed periodically.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Does the right hon. Gentleman anticipate any difficulty in regard to these men returning from the Colonies?

Mr. HALDANE: No, our experience is that they come back very readily.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Do they have to pay their own fare back?

Mr. HALDANE: I suppose so.

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Mr. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers arrived at Southampton from Egypt on the 14th instant, their destination being Dublin, not many hours sail further on; whether he is aware that this battalion was disembarked at Southampton, put into a train for Holyhead re-embarked there, and, after a very bad passage, arrived at daylight and marched through Dublin at 6 a.m. in pouring rain to Portobello Barracks; and, considering that the growth of military expenditure in recent years precludes ecomomy being alleged as a ground for any acts of mal-administration by the military authorities, why these officers and men were put to such an amount of discomfort, with probable injury to health, considering the battalion was fresh from a hot climate, when the ship might have been sent on direct to Dublin; and will he say what would have been the extra cost, if any, if the transport had been sent on to Dublin to disembark the men, and what was the cost involved in transporting this regiment from Southampton to Dublin in the manner actually carried out.

Mr. HALDANE: The facts are as stated in the Question. My hon. friend is, however, apparently unaware that the "Soudan," a vessel of 6,600 tons, cannot be berthed at Dublin Port. The cost involved in sending the regiment by rail from Southampton was £550. If it had been possible to send the vessel to Dublin the extra expense would have been £475.

Mr. LEA: Is there any reason why the troops should not have been sent to Kingston and disembarked there?

Mr. HALDANE: I do not know if there would have been any saving by that.

Mr. LEA: It is not a question of saving; it is the discomfort and hardship imposed on the men I am thinking of.

Mr. HALDANE: I cannot say if more discomfort was involved in the route taken.

South African Garrison.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether His Majesty's Government have decided to reduce the troops in South Africa by some 4,000 men and 600 horses; and, if so, whether he can state what troops of each arm will be maintained in the various British South African Colonies, inclusive of local forces.

MR. HALDANE: It has been decided to withdraw from South Africa one regiment of Cavalry and four battalions of Infantry. As regards the last part of the Question, I am not at present in a position to state the detailed redistribution of the troops.

Rifle and Bayonet Lengths.

*MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can furnish any information with regard to the comparative lengths of rifle and bayonet in present use by other great Powers, Germany. France, Austria, Russia, and Italy, with the rifle and bayonet about to be issued to our troops; and whether he can inform the House what are the advantages claimed for the British weapon.

MR. HALDANE: The comparative lengths of rifle and bayonet in present use by Powers are as follows: Germany, 5 ft. 9¾ in.; France, 5 ft. 11 in.; Austria, 4 ft. 11½ in.; Russia, 5 ft. 9 in.; Italy 5 ft. 2¼ in.; Great Britain, short rifle with new bayonet that is to be issued, 5 ft. 1¾ in.; Great Britain, short rifle with present pattern bayonet, 4 ft. 8¾ in. Great Britain, long rifle with present pattern bayonet, 5 ft. 1½ in.; Japan, 5 ft. 5½ in. The advantages claimed for the new bayonet are: (*a*) That its extra length and shape make it a better weapon for bayonet fighting; (*b*) That its shape is better adapted for such subsidiary purposes as cutting brushwood, etc., than the present service pattern.

*MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Then are the rifles and bayonets to be served out to our troops shorter than the majority used by foreign troops?

MR. HALDANE: Some are shorter, as in the case of Austria, others are longer, as in the case of Germany.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Will the right hon Gentleman following precedent place samples of the weapons in the Tea-Room for inspection?

MR. HALDANE: Yes, Sir.

Mortality in the Rand Mines.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, what is the death rate for 1907 and to the present period for Chinese in the gold mines of the Rand and for natives recruited in Nyassaland for the gold and diamond mines of the Transvaal, respectively.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): The average death rate per 1,000 per annum for Chinese on the Rand gold mines for 1907, is, I believe, 16·085. The death rate of Nyassaland natives on the Premier Mine for the twelve months ended June, 1907, the latest figures available was 106·6. I should add that a high rate of mortality has prevailed for the period among all the native labourers employed on the Premier Diamond Mine, as is shown by the fact that the rate amongst British Basutos and East Coast natives on the Premier Mine was 52·8 and 42·35, respectively, compared with a rate of 20·3 and 33·1 on other mines in the Transvaal. The Secretary of State does not underrate the serious nature of these figures and Reports. The subject has been engaging the attention of the Transvaal Government and steps are being taken to carry out the recommendations of a medical board which investigated the causes of this high rate.

SIR GILBERT PARKER asked whether His Majesty's Government would bring reasonable pressure on the Transvaal Government to carry out the express opinion of the House of Commons that recruiting from Nyassaland ought to be stopped in the interests of humanity.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no reason to believe that any pressure is necessary to make the Transvaal Government take all the steps they can to reduce this lamentable mortality. With regard to recruitment in Nyassaland, one of the principal reasons that induce the Government to sanction this recruiting is that the natives in any case make their way down habitually, and that no arrangements for the control of recruiting can be enforced.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Cannot you prohibit the natives from sacrificing themselves in this fashion ?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am informed that if no recruiting were allowed a considerable number of natives would make their way down independently, although suffering frightful hardships on the road. But I agree that I do not think that reason altogether satisfactory.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Is there any reason to believe that many of the natives of Nyassaland are finding their way down ?

MR. CHURCHILL: No, as a certain number are allowed to be recruited.

Dinizulu.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether his legal advisers and friends have free access to Dinizulu for the purpose of assisting him in his defence.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no information that any restrictions beyond those required by the ordinary regulations are imposed. Under these the access of legal advisers and friends is by the authority of the magistrate.

MR. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the Colonial Office have now received from the Natal Government the information requested by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 2nd January, in Telegram No. 102, Cd. 3888. as to the refusal of the authorities to allow Miss Colenso to visit Dinizulu and in that case what were the grounds of refusal; and whether the Natal Supreme Court made any order in the matter, and what were its terms.

MR. CHURCHILL: Information has now been received in a despatch from the Governor showing that the Minister of Justice in an affidavit declared that his reason for refusing to let Miss Colenso see Dinizulu was that he believed that she desired to see the prisoner for the purpose of publishing in newspapers accounts of her interviews and that in view of a statement with regard to bribing gaol attendants attributed to her, the restrictions should be upheld. He further made various allegations against her action in regard to natives particularly in reference to her school at Bishoptown. The Supreme Court held that the Minister of Justice had not the right to overrule the written pass given by the magistrate under a statutory power, but the existing pass being a fortnight old the Judge refused to order that access should be given upon it and directed Miss Colenso to apply again for a pass to the magistrate. Miss Colenso subsequently visited the gaol and saw Dinizulu.

MR. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether, having regard to the fact that the telegram from Miss Colenso to Dinizulu, urging him to surrender and assuring him of fair trial and assistance in his defence, was transmitted through the Colonial Office, any specific steps have been taken by that Department to secure these ends; and, if so, what is their nature.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Secretary of State is expecting a telegram on this matter and I had hoped it would have arrived this morning; but it has not, and I must ask my right hon. friend to postpone his Question to a later date.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the law of Natal, and especially the Act No. 22, of 1896, governing the procedure in magistrates' courts, prescribes that the proceedings shall be in public; and if so, by what authority having the force of law has the preparatory examination of Dinizulu been conducted in secret.

MR. CHURCHILL: The provisions referred to relate to the trial of prisoners, not to the preparatory examination preliminary to commitment for trial. Under Section 4 of the Law No. 16 of 1861, for improving the administration of criminal justice, the magistrate has full power to order that no person shall have access to or remain in the room in which the examination is held and which is not to be deemed an open court if it appear to him that the ends of justice will be best answered by so doing. I would remind my hon. and learned friend that much the same provision exists in the Indictable Offences Act, 1848, Section 19.

MR. MACKARNESS: Did the magistrate give any reason for thinking the ends of justice were served by holding this inquiry in private?

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot say without notice. It was purely a matter of magisterial discretion under the law.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the law of Natal governing the procedure in criminal cases before magistrates, and especially the Ordinance No. 18, of 1845, prescribes that the preparatory examination of a prisoner shall be based upon a definite charge from information upon oath; whether, in the warrant for the arrest of Dinizulu or at any time since, any definite charge upon a sworn information has been made; and, if not, upon what grounds have the Government of Natal justified the arrest, imprisonment, and prolonged criminal proceedings against Dinizulu.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Ordinance contemplates the apprehension of an accused person upon information taken upon oath that there are reasonable grounds of suspicion against him. In the case of Dinizulu the arrest was made on a warrant specifying high treason. Some of the sworn information on which the Natal Government rely will be found printed at length in the Blue-book Cd. 3888.

MR. MACKARNESS: What act of high treason was specified in the warrant?

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not know if any special act was specified, but of course the evidence would turn on that.

MR. MACKARNESS: Do the Government intend to assent to the continuance of this practice of investigating charges against a person without giving him the details of the charges?

MR. CHURCHILL was understood to reply that this was a matter of constitutional procedure. The Government would, of course, do all they could to have it properly carried out.

Martial Law in Zululand.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is entirely within the authority of the Governor of a British Colony to proclaim martial law in that Colony, or to revoke such proclamation at any moment; whether the Governor of Natal has expressed his disapproval of the proclamation and continuance of martial law in the province of Zululand; whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies has informed the governor of his opinion that it is unjustifiable to maintain martial law in that province for the purpose of arresting criminals and searching for arms; and whether, under the existing conditions, it is possible for Dinizulu to obtain the evidence necessary for his defence.

MR. CHURCHILL: Martial law was proclaimed in December on the advice of Ministers, as it was in 1906, and is being maintained on their advice. The Governor and Secretary of State have expressed the opinions attributed to them. With regard to Dinizulu's defence I would remind the hon. Member that, as I informed the House recently, the Natal Government declare that any allegations which may have been made against them as to the collection of evidence or difficulties thrown in the way of the prisoner's witnesses for his defence are false.

British East African Protectorate.

*SIR SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the estimated native population in the British East Africa Protectorate; how many of the natives are believed to possess firearms; how many white troops and police are there in the entire territory; whether in the Kenya Province, with a native population officially estimated at 600,000 men, there are under 200 native police and only five or six white officers; and does the Colonial Office propose to constitute a Department of Native Affairs, under the direction of a native Commissioner with South African or other Colonial experience.

MR. CHURCHILL: The native population has been estimated at 4,000,000, but this must be regarded as a very rough estimate; only a very small number of the natives are believed to possess firearms; there are no white troops and about twenty white police in the entire territory; I am unable to state the exact number of native police and white officers at present in the Kenya Province but I see no reason to doubt the accuracy of the hon. Member's figures; the Secretary of State has already appointed a Secretary for Native Affairs who has a large experience of local conditions and is at present attached to the Lieutenant-Governor's and Secretariat Department.

*SIR SCOTT ROBERTSON: May I ask how many were killed and wounded in the recent disturbances?

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice must be given of that.

*SIR SCOTT ROBERTSON: How many of the native population are subjects of His Majesty from India?

MR. CHURCHILL: A very small proportion, not more than 20,000, I think.

*SIR SCOTT ROBERTSON: And what are they? Soldiers, policemen, farmers, traders or coolies?

MR. CHURCHILL: I cannot be expected to be possessed of all those particulars. There are no Indian soldiers there.

Persia and Turkey.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the frontier disputes between Persia and Turkey have been settled or are in process of being settled.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir Edward Grey): The Turco-Persian Frontier Commission is still at Urumia and discussing the question.

Falkland Islands.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has had any recent correspondence with the Argentine Government with regard to the Falkland Islands; and, if so, whether he will lay it upon the Table.

MR. RUNCIMAN: There has been no recent correspondence on the subject of the Falkland Islands. Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to tell my right hon. friend privately on what information his Question has been founded that my right hon. friend may form an opinion as to what it refers to.

Deaths under Anæsthetics.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are any statistics of the number of deaths under anæsthetics administered for the purpose of an operation occurring annually in the United Kingdom or any part thereof; whether he has information in the Home Office, or at his command, from which such statistics can be compiled; and, if not, will he take steps to obtain this information in future.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The number of deaths under anæsthetics administered for the purpose of operation which occurred in England and Wales in the year 1906, was 183. The figures will be found on pages 413 and 419 of the last Report of the Registrar-General. These returns are collated from the verdicts of coroners' juries in cases in which inquests are held, and from the certified causes of death in cases where no inquest is held.

London Tailors Workshops.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the

Home Department whether his attention has been called to the number of complaints made respecting alleged breaches of the Particulars Clause in tailoring workshops in London during 1907; and whether he will take the necessary steps to secure the enforcement of the clause.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention has not been specially called to this matter; and I find on inquiry that only nineteen complaints were received during 1907 by the London inspectors of breaches of the Particulars Order in tailoring workshops. Proceedings were taken in five cases and a conviction secured in each case. In the enforcement of these Orders, the inspecting staff must necessarily rely to a considerable extent on information received from the workers themselves. Any complaints made to them will be inquired into and, I may add, will be treated as confidential.

Factory Inspection in West London.

MR. CURRAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware of the inconvenience experienced by trade organisations and the workers generally, by reason of the difficulty of ascertaining who the responsible inspectors for the West London district are, owing to the uncertainty caused by divided and overlapping authority, a consequence of which is that offences are not discovered nor dealt with; and whether it is possible to arrange the duties of factory inspectors (male and female) in such a way that overlapping in the tailoring trade could be effectually obviated and the position of the inspectors made intelligible to both employers and employed.

MR. GLADSTONE: No suggestion that any inconvenience is caused by the existing arrangements has been made to me prior to the hon. Member's Question, nor do I quite understand what is the overlapping or difficulty to which he refers. The name and address of the inspector for the district is stated in the copy of the Abstract posted in every works, and also the name and address of the principal lady inspector; and special complaints relating to the employment of women and girls can, if desired, be made to the latter, other complaints to the former inspector. The Abstract is required to be posted where it can be easily read by the workers. As regards trade organisations, the names and addresses of the responsible inspectors can always be obtained through the workers, or from the published reports of the chief inspector, or by inquiry at the offices of the district inspectors. I may add that laundries and milliners' and dressmakers' workshops in West London are specially assigned to the lady inspectors, but no confusion should arise as their names alone appear in the Abstract.

MR. CURRAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that certain complications have arisen owing to the male and female inspectors visiting factories where both classes of garments are manufactured, and that the organised workers complain that a certain amount of inspection has been neglected through this unsystematic form of overlapping?

MR. GLADSTONE: If the hon. Member will give me information, I will inquire.

MR. CURRAN: I will give specific cases.

Sunday Trading.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends this session to introduce a measure dealing with the question of Sunday trading, on the lines of the recommendations of the Joint Committee of 1906.

MR. GLADSTONE: No, Sir; I am afraid that I see no prospect of doing so.

Dartmoor Convict Mutiny.

MR. HAY MORGAN (Cornwall, Truro): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to certain grave allegations recently made with regard to a mutiny at Dartmoor Prison; whether any independent inquiry has been or will be made in reference to them, and, if so, will he state the result of such inquiry. and whether, if the allegations are false, he will place them before the Attorney-General for the purpose of considering whether proceedings should be taken against the persons responsible for circulating them.

Mr. GLADSTONE: No, Sir; my attention had not been drawn to these allegations until my hon. friend mentioned them; but I have received a full Report from the Prison Commission as to the recent occurrence at Dartmoor, and I am satisfied that there is absolutely no foundation for the statements and insinuations which have been made. It would, in my opinion, be undesirable to call further attention to them by taking criminal proceedings or other steps. The staff of His Majesty's Convict Prisons are carefully selected men of high character, and they carry out their extremely difficult and trying duties with remarkable patience and humanity.

Laundry Inspection.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether before issuing Order No. 1,010 regarding the separation of departments in laundries, he consulted representatives of the workpeople engaged; whether any district inspectors have certified laundries under the Order, and what number of applications have been made by proprietors for such certificates; whether the effect of the Order is to allow laundries to work between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., with three different batches of workpeople working for different periods in the same laundry; and whether factory inspectors have frequently reported that under such conditions they find it impossible to check the number of hours worked by the individual employee.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir; before the Order was issued it was published in draft and in accordance with the practice now followed as a result of consultation between the Department and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, copies were sent to that committee for communication to the representatives of the workmen concerned. I am informed that 334 applications have been received in the different districts (excepting three from which Returns have not yet come in) and 230 certificates have been granted. The Order will allow different periods of employment to be worked in the different departments, and in the Metropolitan area where the period of employment from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. is permissible it would be possible for work to be going on in the laundry from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., but not, of course, in the same department or for the same worker. The Answer to the last paragraph of the Question is in the negative, and I do not anticipate that any difficulty will arise under the Order.

Bottled Milk.

Mr. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that machines are being sold for automatically filling bottles with milk, such bottles, which are sold retail, containing less than the standard quantity of milk; and whether he can take steps to ensure that the use of such machines and the sale of milk from such bottles shall be illegal.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Kearley, Devonport): There is no standard bottle measure, and the use for trade of bottles not marked with a legal denomination is lawful under Section 22 of the Weights and Measures Act, 1878.

Census of Labour.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will arrange that at the taking of the next Census the information as to occupation shall be indicated in such a way that the numbers of skilled and unskilled working men, and their proportions to the adult males of the population, be recorded.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): The Registrar-General informs me that there does not appear to him to be any practical method by which the desired information could be obtained by means of the next Census. The difficulty lies in framing a definition which would in practice enable it to be determined whether particular men are to be classed as skilled or unskilled in relation to the various employments in the country. I recognise, however, the object which the hon. Member has in view, and if he has any suggestions to make on the point I have mentioned, the Registrar-General will be happy to consider them.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Are the resources of the right hon. Gentleman's Department exhausted?

MR. JOHN BURNS: By no means, but it is impossible to make precisely the definition which the hon. Member seeks to obtain. If it can be done it will be done.

The Royal Commission on Whisky.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the reason why no representative of Ireland has been appointed on the Royal Commission to inquire into the manufacture of whisky; and whether, in view of the fact that the question is of vital concern to a number of whisky manufacturers and traders in Ireland, he will consider the advisability of giving Ireland adequate representation on the Commission.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this Question. I communicated with the Irish Local Government Board before the Royal Commission was constituted. They nominated Professor Adeney, the curator of the Royal University of Ireland and a leading examiner in chemistry, to act on it, and he was appointed accordingly. I may add that it was not intended that the manufacturers and traders should be represented on the Commission. They will be asked to give evidence before it.

MR. J. DEVLIN asked whether it was not a fact that the appointment of this gentleman had given rise to the greatest dissatisfaction in all parts of Ireland; that no one had ever heard of him until his appointment was announced; and that Professor Adeney was not an Irishman at all.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My information is that the appointment of the Commission as a whole has given general satisfaction amongst those who know most about both pot-still and patent-still whisky, and, until this Question was put on the Paper, I had received no complaint as to either its constitution or its *personnel*.

MR. J. DEVLIN: Has not the right hon. Gentleman seen protests in different parts of the country—in the *Daily Independent* and even from the Irish correspondent of the London *Times*—and are those who are not interested in this question those who are to be consulted as to the character of the Commission?

MR. JOHN BURNS: My information does not altogether tally with that of the hon. Gentleman, for a London paper this morning [Cries of "Which"]—the *Standard*, which in this matter is, I should say, as authoritative as *The Times*—says, "Pot-still distillers would prefer the Commission to be impartial and remote from the trade."

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): May I say that we on these benches desire that the Commission should be impartial, and the right hon. Gentleman should endeavour to get the name of some Irishman who will command the confidence of all parties in Ireland instead of allowing the Local Government Board in Ireland to nominate a gentleman of whom nobody ever heard in Ireland, and against whom, both in Belfast and in Dublin, there have been strong protests?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have taken every step that one could reasonably take to ascertain the qualifications of this particular gentleman for this particular purpose, and I have received this letter from a gentleman who, on this matter, I consider to be as authoritative as anybody else in Ireland:—"I have no knowledge of Professor Adeney's politics, religion or parentage, but he has been in Ireland practically all his life, and I fancy upon the particular question of the distinctive differences in the chemical composition of genuine and adulterated potable spirits his knowledge is equal to that of any expert in the United Kingdom, as he has made a special study of this subject. His degree of Doctor of Science of the Royal University was conferred upon him by the

Senate on account of his researches in bacterial fermentation, among other allied chemical objects. He had a very distinguished college career, and he has held various posts in connection with chemistry and research, and is now an examiner in chemistry and curator of the science department of the Royal University of Ireland. He has been vice-president of the Institute of Chemistry of Great Britain and Ireland, and has represented Ireland on the council of that body." May I add myself, as a lifelong abstainer from both pot-still and patent-still, that I thought this man the best man to appoint ?

MR. J. DEVLIN: Is he an Irishman, and is the writer of that letter Sir W. S. Gilbert ?

MR. JOHN BURNS: No; Sir Henry Robinson.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Oh! Sir Henry Robinson.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Why is this Commission composed mainly of Englishmen, seeing that whisky is manufactured mainly in Ireland and Scotland, and that Englishmen know nothing about whisky except the consumption of it ?

[No Answer was returned.]

Jersey Fodder Importation Regulations.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he is aware that six years ago, a mild outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease having been reported as prevailing in some French departments adjacent to those from which fodder was being shipped to Jersey, the State forthwith passed a law prohibiting the importation of fodder from the whole of France, and that, although, according to French official statements, the infected departments have been free of the plague for some considerable time, the prohibition remains in force and the law was renewed at this last 1907 legislative session; and will His Majesty's Government pass a law prohibiting Continental fodder coming into Great Britain and Ireland.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): I understand that the importation of fodder into Jersey from France has been prohibited since 1900, and that in 1907 the prohibition was extended to fodder brought from Guernsey and its dependencies. The suggestion that similar restrictions should be adopted in the United Kingdom is under consideration.

Foreign Animals' Wharf at Alderney.

MR. T. DAVIES (Fulham): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board are opposed to the establishment of a foreign animals wharf at Alderney, on account of the danger of introduction of disease into Great Britain and of the practical evidences of the insufficiency of any system of quarantine to prevent its introduction into this country; whether as regards a business which is now carried on at Antwerp, similar in all respects to that proposed in Alderney, the Board of Agriculture is satisfied that the regulations of the Belgian Government and the sanitary precautions taken by them afford a sufficient safeguard against any danger of infection to British cattle; and why the regulations and precautions, satisfactory when carried out by a foreign Government, would be insufficient when laid down and supervised, as proposed, by the Board of Agriculture itself.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. We are not satisfied that the sanitary precautions taken by the Belgian Government afford sufficient security against the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease into this country, and the importation of cattle from Belgium is therefore prohibited. The admission of animals into the Channel Islands from countries affected with foot-and-mouth disease would, we believe, be attended with considerable danger, inasmuch as experience has shown that nothing short of the absolute prohibition of importation from infected countries will prevent the introduction of disease. Section 25 of the Diseases of Animals

Act, 1894, makes it incumbent upon us to adopt this course.

Hay Imports and Glanders.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that hay imported into this country is the medium by which glanders is spread and kept alive; whether the disease is confined principally to stables where large studs are kept and where imported hay is used; and will he cause inquiry to be made.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Our veterinary officers are satisfied that glanders is not spread or kept alive in the manner suggested, and their experience does not go to show that the disease is confined principally to large studs for the feeding of which imported hay is used. In these circumstances my noble friend does not think that any useful purpose would be served by an inquiry into the matter.

Milk-Blended Butter.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can say whether the Board of Agriculture still approves of the name of Pearksown and the other names to which Pearks is added, for milk-blended butter, having regard to the fact that a firm of the name of Pearks and Company, Limited, manufactures and sells this article.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Yes, Sir.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Is not the hon. Gentleman aware that the name "Pearksown" leads purchasers to believe they are buying butter?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: I am not aware of the fact. If the hon. Member can give me any information I will consider it.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Would not common sense tell the hon. Gentleman it is a fact? Will the hon. Gentleman do away with the name which misleads the public?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: It is a question for the President of the Board of Agriculture to consider.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: You have said that before.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): In view of these difficulties of nomenclature why not on the principle of calling a spade a spade call this article milk-blended butter?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Because it would be illegal.

Imports of Foreign Fodder.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can say whether the Board of Agriculture has yet come to a decision with regard to the importation of foreign forage into the United Kingdom, owing to the existence of foot-and-mouth disease among cattle in the Netherlands.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: No decision has yet been arrived at in this matter.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: How long will the Department think before they come to a decision in the matter? Is it the view of the Board that this disease can be kept out of the United Kingdom without preventing foreign forage coming into this country?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The President of the Board is considering the question.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: He has been doing so for the last fortnight and has not yet come to a decision.

Cattle Importation Regulations.

Mr. T. DAVIES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will inquire as to how far the restrictions imposed on the importation of cattle for slaughter into Great Britain by the Board of Agriculture are being kept up for a protectionist purpose, and not solely for the purposes for which powers were given by the Board of Agriculture by Section 25 of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. My hon. friend will not expect me to assert that we have done more or less than our duty under the statutory provisions to which he refers.

MR. T. DAVIES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that in consequence of the restrictions imposed on the importation of foreign cattle for slaughter into Great Britain, of 470,212 cattle imported in 1907, 344,461 came from the United States, and that of live and dead beef, including frozen and chilled, the United States provided 241,441 tons and Argentina 134,577 tons out of a total of 451,322 tons imported; and if he will cause inquiries to be made as to whether the imports of beef from the United States and a large proportion of those from Argentina are controlled by a few firms of Chicago meat packers.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. The statistics cited by my hon. friend are practically correct. There is evidence to show that the reply to his second inquiry is in the affirmative.

Scottish Fishery Regulations.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if whaling companies will be notified that if they infringe the rules and regulations made by the Fishery Board, especially as regards killing whales within the forty mile limit, their licences will be forfeited.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The issue of the licences will be subject to the proviso that the Whale Fisheries Act, 1907, must be complied with in every respect. A copy of the Act has been sent to the representatives of each company, and they are therefore well aware of the regulations to be observed.

Scottish Congested Districts Board.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the Local Government Board has ever been called on to express any approval or otherwise of the guarantee given by any individual on which the local authority has undertaken any work subsidised by the Congested Districts Board.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Answer is in the negative. The Congested Districts Board are concerned only with the guarantee as to maintenance given to them by the local authority responsible for the particular work in question.

Scottish Cattle Sale Yards.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state whether the police have received instructions at any time to report on the number of diseased dying cattle exposed for sale in public sale yards in Scotland.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have no knowledge of the existence of such practice as is referred to by my hon. friend.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire as to the truth of the statement? I have seen dying cattle exposed with my own eyes.

MR. SINCLAIR: If my hon. friend will be good enough to give me information, I will inquire.

Glasgow Cattle Sales.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state how many cattle sold by public auction or privately in Glasgow have been, after slaughter, condemned as being unfit for food; how many on an average have been condemned as being unfit for food before slaughter; and if the inspectors have sufficient technical knowledge to enable them to condemn at any rate some percentage of animals dying of tuberculosis before they are purchased for food.

MR. SINCLAIR: It is impossible to obtain all the information asked for by the hon. Member. As regards the first part of his Question, I am informed that in 1906 the figures of the animals slaughtered in the public slaughter-houses are as follows—

Class of animal.	Number slaughtered.	Number condemned (wholly or partly) for all causes, including tuberculosis.	Number condemned (wholly or partly) for tuberculosis.
Cattle - - - - -	43,895	2,967	2,194
Sheep and Lambs - -	254,635	421	1
Pigs - - - - -	45,456	2,258*	2,141*
Calves - - - - -	4,087	57	19

* Include 2,034 heads.

No animals were condemned in 1906 before slaughter under Section 437 of the Public Health Act. As regards the last part of the hon. Member's Question, the medical inspector of the Local Government Board for Scotland reports as follows :—" The inspection of all animals slaughtered in the city, both home and foreign, is a searching one. I know of no place in Scotland where the detailed examination of all carcases is equally thorough."

Barlinnie Gaol—Discharge of Prisoners.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that prisoners, on the expiration of their terms of imprisonment in Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow, are not liberated at the gate of the prison, but are conveyed in company in corporation trams from Barlinnie to Cathedral Square, Glasgow, in charge of warders, and there liberated in view of a curious crowd of men, women, and children; whether prison officials have any legal control over prisoners when they leave the precincts of the prison on the day of their discharge; whether he will consider the advisability of securing the immediate liberation of prisoners on leaving the prison and giving them, if need be, their fare or a token by which they could travel free by tram to any quarter of Glasgow to which they desired to go; and whether, having regard to the demoralising effect on the prisoners, who, whether old offenders, first offenders, or juveniles, are herded together in the same tramcar, and on the public by the continuance of the present system of gaol discharge, steps will be taken for its discontinuance.

MR. SINCLAIR: Prisoners on leaving Barlinnie Prison are free, but arrangements have been made whereby they are taken into Glasgow by special tramway cars. The prisoners leave the car in an open part of Cathedral Square, not far from the other Glasgow prison, and near the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society's offices. A warder accompanies the prisoners on the journey, but they are not in his charge. This arrangement was come to in order to meet other complaints in which objections were made to the course suggested by the hon. Member. The prisoners when in the special tramcar are seated so far as circumstances allow so as to separate first offenders and juveniles from habitual offenders. The journey lasts for only twelve minutes but the warder is there, and the agent of the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society joins the car on its way to meet the men who need help. The prisoners have some friends meeting them but the number could not be called a crowd.

No Licensing Bill for Scotland.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he intends to introduce a Licensing Bill for Scotland during the present session; and can he say at what stage of the session it will be introduced.

MR. SINCLAIR: It is not possible for the Government now to promise to introduce a Licensing Bill for Scotland this session.

Illegal Trawling in the Moray Firth.

*CAPTAIN WARING (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that between 6th and 20th February trawlers have been constantly at work in the Moray Firth about ten miles off Buckie, and that on 14th February two trawlers were at work west of Lybster and four miles off Castle of Dunbeath; whether these cases have been reported; and, if not, where the fishery cruiser was on these dates.

MR. SINCLAIR: The specific cases referred to by my hon. friend have not been reported to the Fishery Board. H.M.S. "Ringdove" was in Devonport during the whole of the period mentioned; the "Freya" was in Aberdeen on 6th and 7th instant (in connection with the trial of the master of the trawler "Strathdon"), and she was cruising to Shetland on 7th and 8th instant; she was in Shetland and west coast waters from the 8th to 18th instant, and patrolling the Moray Firth on 19th and 20th instant.

CAPTAIN WARING: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland a Question of which I have given him private notice, viz., whether his attention has been drawn to an outrage committed in the Moray Firth; when, on the night of Wednesday, 19th February, the fishing boat, "Paramount B.F. 628," from Portgordon, was fishing four miles south-east of Wick Bay, a trawler "S.D. 12" passed through her nets destroying four, and on being accused of this sailed alongside the "Paramount" and fired two gun shots into her; whether he will cause inquiries to be made which will lead to the apprehension of the offenders, and what steps he will take to prevent the recurrence of such an outrage.

MR. SINCLAIR: My attention has been drawn to the circumstances referred to by my hon. friend, and the matter is now under inquiry.

Irish Agricultural Inspectors—Mr. Porter's Salary.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), whether Mr. T. S. Porter, one of the inspectors of agriculture in the employment of the Department, is paid a salary of £1,000 a year, with first-class railway fare; and, if so, will he state the duties Mr. Porter discharges in return for this salary.

*THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): Mr. Porter has a salary of £800 a year with £200 subsistence allowance, from which a sum of £45 12s. 6d., Naval pension, is deducted. When travelling, first-class railway fare is allowed, as in the case of other agricultural inspectors. Mr. Porter's work at the present time is being re-arranged owing to the severance of the connection between the Department and the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, but his duties are connected with the Department's agricultural schemes and the marketing of agricultural produce. The appointment is statutory, Mr. Porter having been transferred with the salary named from the Land Commission to the Department under the Act of 1899.

MR. MOONEY (Newry): May I ask if this is the same Mr. Porter about whom the Member for South Tyrone interrogated Mr. Bryce, in 1906, alleging that he was doing the same work as the other inspectors whose salaries were £400 a year, and can the hon. Gentleman say whether since he became the head of the Department he has discovered any reason why this gentleman should be given double their salary for doing the same work?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: With regard to the Question in 1906 it was stated there were five agricultural inspectors with salaries ranging from £500 to £300 a year. Mr. Porter was transferred under the Act and I have no power to alter the terms of his appointment.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is not his chief qualification that he is a son-in-law of Mr. Commissioner Wrench and that he is a Horace Plunketeer?

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR: Has the Vice-President in his Department any more scandalous jobs of this kind?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I hope I have made it clear that the appointment is a statutory one, and that I have no responsibility for it.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is this Mr. Porter receiving £1,000 a year for supervising the expenditure of £3,000 a year?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: No, £5,000.

[No Answer was returned.]

DIVORCE LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Order for Second Reading upon Friday read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

NEW BILLS.

POLLING DISTRICTS AND REGISTRATION OF VOTERS (IRELAND) BILL.

"To confer upon county councils in Ireland the power to alter the Polling Districts and alter the method of compiling lists of Voters," presented by Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh; supported by Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Joyce, Lord Arthur Hill, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Captain Craig, Mr. Thomas Corbett, Mr. Devlin, and Mr. Kennedy; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 111.]

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES).

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.), in asking leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the conditions on which public money may be applied in aid of elementary education in England and Wales, and for other purposes incidental thereto, said:—The indulgence of the House may be asked for any Member who is responsible for the introduction of a Bill, but most of all if its subject relates to education. He cannot flatter himself that he is writing on a clean slate. He has to bear in mind opinions, principles, and even prejudices which he must allow for, and somehow adjust if he hopes to make any advance. Those of us who have been ten years in this House have witnessed victories which have led to further strife and repulses which have left the defeated armies in the field. We have learnt our lesson ill if we still think that a mere victory over opponents is worth having, and that a mere obstruction of changes which are inherent in the policy which Parliament has already approved will check those changes in the long run. I do not propose to enter now into the general aspects of this question. There will be other opportunities in the course of these debates. But I would wish to say one word more by way of preface. We are approaching this subject now for the second time in this Parliament, and I think I am speaking for more than one party when I say that in the interval for reflection since the last effort the desire for a settlement has greatly increased. The public watch with growing indignation and impatience the continuance of these religious dissensions. They feel that the sand is running out in regard to this controversy. If every solution presented to Parliament is to be rejected because it does not give to a church or a denomination all that it wants, the public will feel that the religious controversy is insoluble, and that if we are again to have any hope of peace or of denominational advancement we shall have to remove the religious controversy out of the schools. If we fail once more, if we continue to disagree, we shall have given the most powerful impetus in our generation to the opinion that religion in the schools is a lost cause.

Before I proceed to an outline of the Bill I must say something as to the reason of the Government for departing from the plan proposed two years ago by my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland. In my opinion there could be no better or fairer proposals than he then made, and but for the experience we have had of the reception those proposals received in another place, I do not think the Government could have adopted now any wiser course than to tread the same path as my right hon. friend. He based his proposals on the two governing principles of public control of public elementary schools and no tests for the teachers in those schools. But so far as was consistent with those principles, and subject to them, he endeavoured to secure the identity and special characteristic of those denominational schools which were proved by the wishes of the parents to have good ground for their continued identity. So long as my right hon. friend had the execution of this plan in his own hands, supported by the majority in this House, he conducted it with an ability which is the despair of one who has to follow him, and with a fairness towards the denominational system which resulted in the largest majority for the Third Reading of so controversial a measure that this House has ever seen. But when that Bill passed from this House to another place his whole plan was turned upside down. Although it was defended there by Lord Crewe with an ability and a fairness which were acknowledged on both sides, the majority in that House overlaid the measure with a series of Amendments which entirely spoilt the original plan. Every security which had been given by my right hon. friend for the protection of denominational teaching was made a jumping-off ground for renewed and fatal attacks upon the governing principles of the Bill. It is true that those principles were accepted in the other place in theory, but in practice it was found that they were utterly incompatible with the Lords' notions of the necessary securities for denominational teaching. Compromise on the basis that was then proposed by my right hon. friend has been shown to be impossible, and the Government, therefore, have not adopted the course of reintroducing a measure with the certain result that it would be smothered under the piled up Amendments made in another place.

Now let me for a moment touch upon the educational position as it now stands. As the House knows, there are two great Acts governing our educational system. If I were to select a cardinal feature from each, I should say that in Mr. Forster's Act it was the establishment of local representative authorities for the provision of school accommodation and the administration of elementary education. In the Act of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition I should say that the cardinal feature was the co-ordinating of grades of education under a single local authority. Both those Acts effected a great work in the respects which I have named, and in so far I think they will both be permanent. Under Mr. Forster's Act a type of school was established which experience has proved to be admirably adapted to its purposes. We hear complaints of the council schools, but I think those complaints usually emanate from people who do not use them, and they give satisfaction to the people who do. But under Mr. Forster's Act the council schools, or, as they were then called, the board schools, were only a supplementary part of the national provision. He found and he left a large system of voluntary schools, receiving grants but no rates. These voluntary schools had been founded, in the main, on denominational principles. But children were obliged, under Mr. Forster's Act, and down even to this moment, to attend those schools, whatever the religion of their parents might be. It may be legitimate that grants should be paid to schools which really respond to the wishes of the parents, but I cannot conceive that it is a sound principle that public money should be employed in the maintenance of schools giving denominational instruction which is repugnant to the parents whose children have to attend those schools. Under Mr. Forster's Act a very great multiplication of voluntary schools took place, not, as I have said, in response to any special desire of the parents, but partly from the benevolent zeal of Churchmen for the propagation of their own doctrines, and partly from the thrift of the ratepayers, who found voluntary subscriptions less expensive than school rates. This multiplication of voluntary schools proved the undoing of the system—subscribers began to complain of the intolerable strain. Such was the condition of affairs when the right hon. Gentleman opposite introduced his Bill in 1902.

Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman at that time did not ask himself the question whether very large numbers of those voluntary schools ought ever to have been brought into existence at all, or certainly whether they ought ever to have been allowed to continue to exist. It was notorious at that time that throughout great tracts of the country parents were complaining bitterly that their children were bound to attend these schools. It would have seemed that the proper course in 1902 would have been to find some remedy for that state of things. The right hon. Gentleman provided a remedy for the intolerable strain on the finances of his friends by imposing an intolerable strain on the convictions of his opponents. He charged the maintenance of the voluntary schools on the rates, and he thereby for the first time laid upon the public the whole responsibility for maintaining institutions which were under private control and for the first time permitted religious tests on the appointment of teachers, all of whose salary was paid by the public. I claim that the majority of the nation have recognised that the Act of 1902 inflicted a grievance for which Parliament is bound to find a remedy. As to part of that grievance I can quote the right hon. Gentleman himself as my authority. Speaking of the grievance as it affects single school parishes, he said in this House on 23rd July, 1906—

> "The solution both of 1870 and of 1902 had this great disadvantage, that it left certain grievances, practical grievances in some cases, theoretical grievances in many cases, unredressed. It left the Nonconformist in a single school area, where there was only a Church school, face to face with the necessity of sending his child to that school, or to no school at all."

Here was an admission.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Did not I say there was another grievance?

MR. McKENNA: Certainly, the right hon. Gentleman said there was another grievance on the other side. That was a grievance which it was open to him to remove. The grievance which he admits requires a remedy at this moment. The problem, then, with which we are confronted is how to find, without any revolutionary proceeding, by a measure expressed in clear and unmistakable terms, the acceptance without hesitation or wavering of the principle of public control of our public elementary schools and of the abolition of tests for teachers in those schools, and at the same time to have regard to the history of existing institutions, and to the varied traditions, habits, and beliefs which exist amongst our people, which to so many are the dearest part of their lives. That is the problem which the Government have to face.

Now let me endeavour to explain to the House very briefly the measure by which the solution of that problem is sought. May I put a question first? What is the characteristic mark of a public elementary school? What is it that distinguishes it from any other kind of elementary school? I take it to be that it is a school which any child who is not otherwise efficiently educated may be compelled to attend. Down to 1902, and at this moment, there are two kinds of public elementary schools, the provided school and the non-provided school. Under this Bill it is proposed that in future there shall be but one type of public elementary school provided by the public, controlled by the public, managed by the public, and that the teachers in them shall be appointed without religious tests. The House is familiar already with the type of public elementary school which is proposed in the Bill. It will be in every particular the old board school or the present council school. Such a school may be provided by the local authority for every child whose parent wishes it to have accommodation in such a school, and no child can be compelled to attend any other kind of school. That is the new cardinal principle of this Bill, and I hope that principle will receive the acceptance of this House and of Parliament. The religious instruction in this school will be the same as that which has been given in the council schools under the law for the last thirty-eight years. There will be no change except a clear enunciation of the principle that there must be no test on the appointment of the teachers. Now, I think in this proposal the Government are following the road of experience. I do not think it can be disputed, taking the whole period for which we have known these council schools, that the mass of the nation have been satisfied with the kind of education given in them. They have been established in every variety of district, urban and rural, and amongst every variety of local habit, tradition, and political feeling, and nowhere do we find that the parents have complained of them. It will be said that objection has not been taken to these schools in the past because there has been an alternative type of education offered to the parents. That alternative has been more apparent than real. Over considerable tracts of the country there has been no alternative to the council schools, and yet we find the council schools, which have been established here, there, and everywhere merely because there was not sufficient existing accommodation, have in fact given satisfaction.

It will be said also, and I know it will be said by a great many of my hon. friends on this side of the House, that this proposal does not offer the only final and acceptable solution of the difficulty, and that the only logical basis upon which our national system of education can be established is the basis of purely secular schools. Well, Sir, I say it, I confess, with as many apologies as may be necessary, that the argument that a particular proposal is the only logical one does not carry great weight to my mind. What we have to inquire into is, what is the system that is practically adapted to the needs of our people? What do we find has been justified by experience, and what has been condemned? If we have a convenient and practicable system which is logical, so much the better; but if it be not logical, nevertheless do not sacrifice your own convenience. Let us make sure beyond everything else that the parents get the kind of education which they need for their children. [OPPOSITION cheers.] I welcome those cheers from hon. Gentlemen opposite, for I can assure them that I am endeavouring now, for the first time, to recognise the wishes of the parents. As I have said, this Bill establishes only one type of school, the council school. From these council schools as many God-fearing children are sent out year by year as from any other kind of school, and the religious instruction given them does not revolt or shock the consciences of the parents. We should make a great mistake if we were to leave on one side all the lessons that we have learned during the last thirty-eight years, and for the sake of some ground of logical necessity adopt a system which the great majority of our people do not want.

Having said so much of the schools under what I term the national conditions, I think the House will agree that it is impossible to ignore the fact that large sections of our community desire a type of instruction in which more definite denominational teaching is given than in our existing council schools. I recognise clearly that great sacrifices have been made in the past by devoted men and women in founding and maintaining these voluntary schools, and I am aware that, if the State were to refuse to recognise these schools in any form or shape, it would be regarded by very many people as an act of pitiless injustice. The moment voluntary schools are no longer public elementary—the moment they are no longer schools which any child need attend, then, I think, we may begin to consider that the position has changed and that there is room for generous treatment of them. These voluntary schools, if they are to receive Exchequer grants, will have to satisfy all the requirements of the Board of Education. Their standard of education will have to be precisely the same as in the public elementary schools. They will not be allowed to be too small, because efficiency cannot be secured in too small schools. Therefore they will be limited to schools with an average attendance of at least thirty. [Laughter.] My hon. friends laugh, but in the rural districts it is not always easy to maintain schools even of that size. They will further not be allowed to exist, at any rate, with the support of public money in single-school parishes. They must not be carried on for profit, and they must not have a fee of more than 9d. a week. Those are not very severe restrictions to put upon voluntary schools, but they will have this restriction which they have not had before, that they will only exist if the parents wish them, for any parent who does not wish his child to attend such a school can call upon the local authority to find accommodation for his child in a local authority school, and as such schools will not be allowed in single-school parishes there can be no danger of pressure being put upon parents in our rural hamlets to compel them to refrain from asking for a publicly provided school. With regard to single-school parishes, I think it has been generally recognised that those parishes are properly a subject for special treatment. I have already quoted the Leader of the Opposition on that subject. I have not quoted him on the other half of the subject.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR was understood to indicate that what he said on the other subject should also be quoted.

MR. McKENNA: I have not the quotation with me. I was under the impression that the other part dealt with another part of the subject. I am quite aware that individual exceptions can be pointed out, but as a general rule a single-school parish is one in which there are only enough children to justify on educational grounds the existence of one school. In these parishes there must always be a public elementary school, as I have already said, and if in addition to a school of that kind we were to have a multiplication of small rural schools the only object which we should be certain to secure would be the complete destruction of the efficiency of the education. Public money ought not to be spent, whether through rates or through grants, in fostering schools which must be educationally inefficient, and it is, therefore, unnecessary to go beyond the educational argument to justify the proposal in the Bill, that in single-school parishes the State will recognise no other than the public elementary school. From what I have said the House will perceive that the proposal of the Government is that the two kinds of schools shall receive State recognition. One, and that the predominant type, will be the public elementary school publicly supported and publicly controlled, and that alone will receive rate aid. The second, and the exceptional type, will be the voluntary school which will receive grants but no rate aid, and which will be what it has hitherto not been—voluntary in fact as well as in name. It will be supported by volunteers. It will be made grants, but maintained by volunteers, and it will be attended by children whose parents voluntarily wish them to attend.

I have to turn now to a branch of the subject on which I must claim the special indulgence of the House—namely, the financial proposals of the Bill. Of the proposals themselves I shall not attempt more than a brief summary, as I could not hope to make myself intelligible unless hon. Members had in their hands a detailed statement showing precisely what these proposals are. Such a memorandum will be supplied with the Bill, and will give all necessary information. It has been borne in upon me during my short tenure of office how much local administrators are harassed at every point and turn by the unwillingness of the ratepayers in the heavily rated districts to meet the expense of much needed educational improvements. Highly influential deputations representing all the county boroughs, all the counties and boroughs and urban districts, have represented to the Board that the Exchequer must come to the aid of the distressed ratepayers, and that the growth of the education rate must be checked. Medical inspection of school children has added a new charge to the cost of education. It has come on the top of heavy additions to the rates consequent on the Act of 1902. The present Bill does not merely provide means to meet any cost which it may itself entail, but it also gives promise of some relief to the ratepayers, and particularly to the ratepayers in the heavily rated districts. When my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer—who has ever been indulgent to the claims of education — gave me some assurance of Exchequer assistance for carrying out the proposals of the present Bill, I turned my attention at once to the question of how to find better means of distributing the Exchequer money than we have at present. We see in different areas at the present time most surprising variations of the rates. In one district it runs as high as 3s. 1d. in the £; in another it is as low as a penny in the £. These anomalies are very startling and indicate the varying degrees of oppressiveness on the ratepayer, a matter on which the ratepayer is never silent. Now I confess I was ambitious, and I endeavoured if I could to discover a plan more equitable with the view to greater equalisation of the rates. I confess that for a long time I sought for some automatic test of poverty which would be a guide to the Exchequer in the distribution of the grant. It has been alleged, for instance, that one of the main grounds for the heavy rate in a particular district is because the child population in that district is very large in relation to the general population, and very large in relation to the rateable value of the district per head. I have had innumerable sets of figures made out by the officials of the Board of Education, to whom the House will permit me to take this opportunity of tendering my sincere thanks for the elaborate care with which these have been made out. But, unfortunately, I found that this automatic test was of no value at all. Some districts which at the present moment are lowest rated appear from that test to be the very poorest, and I should have been wasting public money, or, at any rate, giving it where it was least wanted in many cases, if I had distributed the grant on that system. After examination lasting many weeks, the only certain factor which I could find at the present time was the expenditure on buildings, and accordingly I have adopted that factor, at any rate, as one of the features in the new proposals for the distribution of the grant. How much is it which each locality spends on new buildings either by way of loan charge or in any other way? But a final solution, I have had reluctantly to come to the conclusion, is impossible at the present time. We have not, in fact, the means of knowledge. Until the present Bill has been in operation for some time it will be quite impossible to see the precise degree in which it may affect particular districts, and to make a fair calculation of the weight of the burden over the country. We cannot say what the burden will be in a particular district. But there is another and a greater issue. We do not, in fact, at present know what is the true rate-burden in any area, and until we get a reform of the system of valuation all over the country we do not know how much we are paying. All we do know is that a 1s. rate in one district is no heavier than a 9d. rate in a second, and no lighter than a 1s. 3d. rate in a third. Until we have the reform in the system of valuation which will be brought about under the measure which my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board has now in hand it is impossible to get a final solution. I have had, therefore, to fall back upon the present basis, unsatisfactory as it is, as the basis of future distribution; but with this warning, that the present proposals are only temporary, and that a distribution on a more rational and equitable basis will be found as soon as once the materials are placed at the disposal of the Board.

The Bill, in the first place, repeals the Aid and Fee Grants, thus placing at the disposal of the Board of Education the whole of the money voted by Parliament in the same way as is now the case in regard to the annual grant. Insofar as the buildings are concerned that is all that is done by the Bill. Further explanation will be found in the Memorandum already spoken of and which will be circulated to Members with the Bill. I first compute the actual amount which was received by a local authority in the last year, and I divide that amount by the number of children in average attendance. This will give a certain amount per child in each area. To that amount I add 2s., and the whole of this becomes a new standard or block grant for the area. To the old grant plus 2s. per child I add further one third of the annual cost of the existing loan charges, and one third of the cost of any future loan charge, including in those loan charges any amount which is paid for rent of land or buildings. To this I further add in the case of heavily rated districts which have been receiving a special grant for the last two years, one half of the amount of grant that they have been so receiving. Those three items, taken together, are subject to certain limitations. First, no area is to receive less per child than 4s. more than it now gets, so that every area, even that which is worst treated under this proposal, will be 4s. per child better off under this Bill than at the present moment. Another limitation is that no area is to get more than 6s. per child more than now. There is a further restriction that no area is to receive more than 75 per cent. of the whole cost of its elementary education. All these benefices added together will cost to the Exchequer something over £1,400,000 a year. If I add to this amount the sum now distributed in grants and divide the total so obtained by the number of children in average attendance, it works out at an average of 47s. per child, and accordingly 47s. per child is the amount which it is proposed to give in grants to voluntary schools. The voluntary and the county council schools will be placed on exactly the same footing; they will receive like grants, and the Board of Education will demand precisely the same standard of secular education from both. We will make sure that with the public money so expended on voluntary schools we meet with a good return in the shape of secular instruction. Let me repeat that I put forward this proposal now only as a temporary scheme of distribution, and it must be reconsidered as soon as a more stable condition of affairs of elementary education is reached and a basis obtained for determining the assessable value, and it is proposed that the scheme will be revised certainly not later than the year 1911. I must apologise for dealing at such a length with a matter which I regret to say is necessarily dry and in many respects tedious.

It remains for me to explain how I propose to deal with the transfer of existing voluntary school buildings which the trustees do not propose to continue as voluntary schools. In the case of all other than single schools in single-school parishes, and even in those parishes in the case of schools with trusts which are not purely educational, the trustees are to be allowed to transfer the buildings to the local education authority if they wish to do so, either absolutely or to such an extent as may be agreed upon and on such terms as may be arranged This, I admit, will be an interference with trusts; but I have an example for that in previous legislation in 1870 and 1902. Complete freedom will be left to either party. With regard, however, to schools under tight trusts in single-school parishes the case is different. It must be remembered that in those parishes no public money of any kind is to be spent under this Bill upon any other than a public elementary school. Therefore, if the trustees of a tight trust school in a single-school parish wish to carry on that school they will be at liberty to do so, but they will be obliged to do it out of their own resources. In a great majority of cases the trustees will have no sufficient funds to enable them to carry on the school, and therefore the trust must fall for it purpose unless some arrangement is made under this Bill to deal with them. We must not overlook the fact that these tight trusts are partly educational and partly denominational. How can we now in the best possible way execute the original purpose of these trusts, having regard to the fact that the school can no longer be kept on or continued on its old lines? I will explain. The reason of that is educational. We do not wish for a multiplication of small schools. Now it is quite clear, in so far as the trust is educational the local authority will execute that part of it by giving elementary education in the school five days in the week. In so far as the voluntary school is under a denominational trust, it can be carried, and properly carried out, on the remaining two days of the week, viz., Saturday and Sunday, and further by giving denominational instruction out of school hours, of course by some teachers other than the regular teachers in the school, during five days in the denominational tenets of those parents who desire their children to receive it. This, I say, will be a complete execution of the trust in its principle and purpose—such a complete execution as will be alone possible if the trust cannot execute itself. For if the State is to be asked to pay for the elementary education, it is entitled to take a share in laying down the position. In the case of tight trusts where the trustees cannot themselves carry on the schools, the school buildings shall be transferred to the local education authority, who will undertake to keep them in good repair, furnished, cleaned, lighted, warmed, and placed at the dissposal of the trustees for the giving of denominational instruction five days in the week out of school hours, and entirely at their disposal on Saturday and Sunday for such denominational purposes as the trustees think fit. I further propose that in order to give every security that the buildings will be used for these purposes, including religious teaching, that the trustees may make it a condition of transfer that Cowper-Temple instruction shall be given in such schools. It will be agreed that a transfer on these terms will be the nearest execution of the trust that is possible under the circumstances, and that therefore no question of rent can possibly arise. Before I leave this subject, let me say upon the question of facilities that where these are proposed to be given for special religious instruction in single-school parishes — because in these parishes voluntary schools will not be allowed—it is not proposed under the Bill to allow the facitities to be given for special religious instruction in other than single-school parishes, because in other than single-school parishes special religious instruction may be given in the voluntary schools. The trustees of any existing school buildings who desire to transfer their buildings to the local education authority on such terms and rent as may be agreed upon, may make it a condition that in these schools Cowper-Temple instruction shall always be given.

To return to one aspect of this matter which I cannot help mentioning—cannot help regarding with other than sincere regard—that is, that every change in our educational system must for the time being cause very great anxiety to the teachers employed in the schools. I am glad to say that it has been always a custom whenever voluntary school buildings have been transferred to the local authority, for the local authority to take over the schools as a going concern, and to continue the school teachers and to pay them not less than their former salaries. I cannot conceive that any variation of this custom is likely to take place under the new system; but in order to relieve the teachers of any anxiety it is proposed to embody in this Bill Clause 7, subsection 3, of the Bill of 1906. Provision is also made to continue the payments to the Annuity Fund for one year so as to safeguard the interest of teachers who may find themselves out of employment. The effect of the Bill, as a whole, is to bring a larger number of schools, and consequently of teachers in those schools, directly under the local authority than is now the case. Though I am aware that there must be anxiety among the teachers as to what will happen to them in the voluntary schools, I would remind them that the amplitude of the grant that is now proposed to be given to the schools is a sufficient security for them, and that there will be funds for paying them an adequate salary.

I think that I have now completed such a preliminary account of this Bill as is necessary to explain its terms. I commend it to the favourable consideration of the House, with the prayer that it may be a settlement of this vexed question. It was with no wish of my own that a year ago I found myself placed at the Board of Education. I was taken from a position, humbler and less conspicuous, but one in which I found myself very happily placed, and in which there was no religious controversy. If I refer to myself now, it is only to say that, coming as I did to the Board of Education with no wish of my own, without any special aptitude for the work, it is impossible for anyone to be there any time without having two great facts borne in his mind. The first and most satisfactory one is that we have in this country a very great number of earnest, zealous men and women, who are giving the best energy of their lives in promoting the cause of education in their own districts. I have met them by scores and hundreds. They have come up to the Board on deputations; and I can assure the House that nothing would please these men and women more than that the path of educational improvement should be made clear before them. I believe that this Bill will help them. The second great fact is that, while the field of possible educational improvement is so unlimited as to offer a boundless prospect of benefit to the nation, we are at every point and at every turn hindered and delayed by this intolerable quarrel over the religious question. I can assure the House, after a year's experience, that I cannot find words that express my sense of the discouraging drag which this long-lasting controversy has placed on educational progress. The Board of Education would ask for nothing better than that their work should be removed from the distorting medium within which a subject of heated political controversy in this House is disposed to centre, and to be allowed to continue their work of educational reform, at any rate, more unobserved than they are at present. They have a great task before them. No office is better equipped with men of ability, energy, and industry. The Board will perform their task, if Parliament will only agree to rescue the question of education from partisan controversy and come to some common agreement for protecting the children. This is the object which the Government have in proposing this Bill; and in the belief that this will be the effect of this proposal I commend it to the acceptance of Parliament.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to introduce a Bill to regulate the conditions on which public money may be applied in aid of elementary education in England and Wales."—(*Mr. McKenna.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman concluded his speech by bespeaking our sympathy for himself and for his Department. As far as I am concerned, he has that sympathy in the fullest measure. When he goes on to say that the object which he has in view in bringing forward this Bill is to relieve the Department over which he presides of all the difficulties incident to the work of education caused by the bitterness of the religious controversy, then I am bound to say that never, in all my Parliamentary experience, have I known a Bill brought in for a particular object which seemed less qualified to carry it out. This Bill, I understand, is to bring religious peace; it is to free the path of philanthropic educationists from the trammels which beset them. The right hon. Gentleman was much happier in his anticipatory description of this Bill, which he gave us six months ago, when he said that the next education measure of the Government would be to bring, not an olive branch, but a sword. The sword is undoubtedly brought forth, but whether the edge is sharp, whether it is likely to be an efficient instrument in the hands of those who attempt to wield it, I have my doubts. The controversy which begins to-night, but which will not end to-night, can alone settle that question. The right hon. Gentleman began with a sort of historical survey of the course of education up to the epoch-making measure which he introduced, and in the course of it he was good enough to quote me as saying that there was a Nonconformist grievance in certain single-school areas. I have always admitted it, and, though the right hon. Gentleman forgot to say so, I did something material in the Act of 1902 to remedy it. I gave to the local authority, whether a school was required from the strictly secular point of view or not, in any district, power to erect another school, if, among other things, they thought that the wishes of the parents—which the right hon. Gentleman appeals to in this case—rendered such a course necessary. But the grievance incident to the single school is not a Nonconformist grievance at all. It often, and mainly, is a Church of England or a Roman Catholic grievance as well. Their view is that if you have a school in which Cowper-Temple teaching is given, you have a grievance precisely on all fours with the grievance alleged on the side of the Nonconformists, who do not approve of the teaching in the single-school areas where the Church of England or Roman Catholics are teaching. What does the right hon. Gentleman do? He not only does not remedy it, but he doubles, quadruples, and multiplies it indefinitely. Has he made any calculation of the number of single-school areas in the country parishes in this country, where at this moment the population are told to go to the schools, and where they approve the religious teaching given and prefer it to the alternative teaching? I can tell him that it is a very large number, and in every one of these parishes the single-school grievance which he quotes me as dealing with is one which he is going to create for the first time in its most aggravated and most unjust shape. In those areas not only is the right hon. Gentleman doing an injury to the parents who send their children to the schools, if the parents prefer the teaching there, but he is committing an act of the grossest injustice to those who built the schools, who spent their money in building them, and who have done so much to maintain them. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to take these schools, to appropriate them for every school day in the week; and he diverts them wholly from one of the purposes for which they were originally constructed. I should have thought that it would have been the business of a statesman, in attempting to do what the right hon. Gentleman says that he desires to do—namely, to remove the religious difficulty—to find some means by which both sets of parents among Churchmen and a Nonconformist minority could obtain that kind of teaching for their children which they most desire. No; the right hon. Gentleman, who talks so much about removing the religious difficulty, gratuitously creates it, and with injustice to those who made the schools. There was not a trace in his speech of the slightest desire to meet the wishes of the parents, of those parents who, rightly or wrongly, prefer the kind of religious instruction now given in these schools, and who would view the change which the right hon. Gentleman is going to force down their throats with the utmost dismay and disapproval. If we turn from the right hon. Gentleman's gross ill-treatment, first, of the owners of the voluntary schools, and secondly, of the parents who approve the teaching in these schools; if we leave for a moment, at all events, the single-school area grievance, which the right hon. Gentleman talks as if he had done something in this proposal to remedy, instead of multiplying and doubling the grievances, and if we turn to the urban areas, what do we find? Apparently, urban districts are not in the right hon. Gentleman's opinion single-school areas at all, and are to have a wholly different method applied to them. There was a great *lacuna* here in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He ought to have told us what constitutes a single-school area. It is perfectly clear even in rural areas that the parish school or the old voluntary school is in a single-school district, but what constitutes a single-school district in a town? That is all-important. How far has a child to go and yet have it in his power to say he has not an alternative school at his disposal? There is a large thoroughfare between two schools, one voluntary and the other provided—they are separated, it may be, by only one hundred yards. Are these in the same or in different areas?

Mr. McKENNA: The definition was in the Bill of 1906. A single-school parish is a parish in which on 1st January, 1908, there was only one school within the area of a minor local education authority. That is very technical. It includes rural parishes, parishes in urban districts under 20,000 and rural districts under 10,000 in which there is only one school.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: But that does not include the larger rural parishes. Therefore it is no definition. What is the definition of a single-school area in London?

Mr. McKENNA: London would not be a single-school area. It would not come under the definition of a minor local authority. But the definition in the Bill of 1906 does not include towns of any sort.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Then it seems that there is something not in the Bill which is of fundamental importance.

Mr. McKENNA: It is in the Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: But there is something not in the Bill, and I am going to show what it is. Towns of over 20,000—however distant its two schools may be, and however difficult of access—will not be single-school areas; and every child will be supposed to have full choice of a school.

Mr. McKENNA: That is so.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Then the Bill may be lacking in logical completeness, and I think it is, but at all events it is comparatively simple. I understand that every voluntary school in an urban district of over 20,000 inhabitants may contract out of the Act if the parents wish it. That is of considerable importance, I should have thought, from the point of view of those who think that every child ought to have within reach a school in which Cowper-Temple teaching is given. What is the definition of "within reach" in the Bill?

Mr. McKENNA: The same as under the existing law. The local authority must provide accommodation for all the children within its area, but it does not necessarily build a school next door to each child. According to practice the distance may be from half a mile to two or even three miles in rural districts. Whatever is the law now will be the law under this Bill.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Then the local authority is to decide whether the school is near enough for the child to go to. That is of enormous importance, because it depends on that decision how many schools and what kind of schools can contract out of the Act. There is no principle laid down in the Bill, and no appeal to the Education Department. It depends entirely on the local authority to decide whether a Church of England or Roman Catholic school can contract out of the Act. Let the House consider what the injury is that the right hon. Gentleman is doing to the cause of education. I have indicated the kind of injury to the owners and trustees of voluntary schools, and to the parents who desire to send their children to those schools. Now as to the cause of education in the urban districts. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Act of 1902 had this great merit—that it did co-ordinate education in all its branches. Everyone who has watched the working of that Act will admit that the right hon. Gentleman did it no more than justice and that the cause of education has gained prodigiously in all great urban centres from the fact that education of all kinds, elementary, secondary, and technical, is brought within the circuit of the power of one single authority, which can deal as a whole with all the educational problems presented by the district, whether of the simple educational kind, or such questions as medical examination, scholarships, and the training of teachers, and all the other subsidiary but most important questions which modern education necessarily involves. From that co-ordination of education the right hon. Gentleman puts it in the power of every voluntary school, if the parents desire, to withdraw. Henceforth, while every child in the country is refused access to denominational education every parent in the urban districts who desires denominational education for his child must send his child to a school withdrawn from the advantages of collective management and support. The right hon. Gentleman says that the choice is given to the parent as to where he shall send his child. Yes, but that is in the urban districts. And what sort of choice is it? The parent will not be able to choose between this and that kind of religious instruction. No, the parent will have to say, Shall I sacrifice the good education of my child in secular matters in order to attain the religious education I desire? You again bring back that bad system of starving every school where the religious education you happen to approve does not prevail. You may be levelling a powerful blow against the Church of England. That is manifestly your object. It is written large in every line of this Bill. But in attempting to strike the Church of England are you not dealing a blow, not only at other denominations, like the Roman Catholics and the Jews, but at the interests of education itself? The right hon. Gentleman knows that he is, and I will convince the most sceptical amongst those who seem to doubt my assertion. The present system, whatever be its merits in the eyes of the right hon. Gentleman, has undoubtedly this merit—that every school is worked up to the same standard of excellence. The teachers of all schools, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and provided, all get the same rate of pay and are all equally qualified to obtain in equal amount the general advantages arising from the co-ordination of education. You are by this Bill going to create a new kind of school for the benefit of those who like their children to be brought up in their own religion, and you will fine those parents by destroying the excellence of the secular education given in those schools. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that he is going to add to the grant a sum which varied between a maximum of 6s. and a minimum of 4s. per child in average attendance. Does any one who knows anything of the statistics of education in this country believe that even the maximum grant of 6s. a child is going to enable the voluntary schools, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Wesleyan, to maintain the standard which has been set by the modern requirements of education. Is it not folly? In London I believe at this moment the cost per child is £3 6s. 8d. for maintenance. The cost before the Act of 1902 was £2 1s. 9d., so that the present addition to maintenance per head in the voluntary schools is no less than 14s., if my information is accurate, since the Act came into operation. The right hon. Gentleman is going to throw upon the managers and owners of voluntary schools not merely the provision of that additional 14s., of which he is going to subscribe 6s., but the whole cost of maintaining the edifice. That may be a very agreeable prospect to hon. Gentlemen who cheer; but may I ask how the education in these schools is going to be kept up to the present standard, which costs £3 6s. 8d. for maintenance? Is it not perfectly obvious on the face of the figures I have given, and I am sure they could be multiplied indefinitely, that the 6s. additional grant that they propose to give is utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the case, and that you will have in the future, as you had before 1902, two classes of schools in all your big towns in which a large number of parents, nobody can tell how many, will prefer sending their children for religious and perhaps other grounds to the denominational schools, where it is impossible that they should find and where nobody expects they ever can find the same level of secular instruction as is now given in schools of all denominations and of all kinds and characters under the Act of 1902. I do not wish to dwell too much upon the gross injustice you are doing to those who spend vast sums of money in building and improving these voluntary schools. Since the Act of 1902, since the new system, I am informed that in London alone over £400,000 has been spent on the Church schools. I do not profess to be an expert in the matter, and I may be mistaken, but I am informed that that is the figure. You are going to destroy the value of a good deal of that, because you are going again to start these invidious distinctions which will give this choice to parents: "Shall we send our child to the relatively ill-equipped voluntary school or to the school which has the Government grant and the rate aid behind it?" I think that is a gross injustice to the subscriber. But I do not wish to make them or their interests or their convictions the main ground of my complaint against this Bill. The main ground of my complaint is that so far as country districts are concerned it is grossly unfair to the parents who send their children to a voluntary and denominational school, and that so far as the urban districts are concerned, you have shattered the great educational work which was by common consent performed in 1902. Every educationist admits that part of the case. You are going to withdraw from the control in secular matters of the central education authority in each district all power of bringing these schools into co-ordination with their general system, all power of aiding the salaries of teachers, all power of seeing that the educational advantages are equal all round, all power of making them share in the general advantages of the district. By so doing you are putting before the parents, Roman Catholic and Anglican, the most cruel of all dilemmas, the most unjust of all choices, namely, "Shall we sacrifice our religious beliefs, in which we want our children to be brought up, in order to give them the worldly advantages which may be obtained from sending them to a well-equipped school; are we to sacrifice things in which we believe and for which we have been ready to sacrifice money, causes in which our whole faith is involved, in order to see that the advantages given to the indifferent parent, it may be, or, at all events, to the Nonconformist parent next door to us, are all given to our children—the advantages which are to be derived from a sound secular education in the schools that have behind them, not merely State aid, but rate aid?" I shall not stop on the present occasion to deal with the extraordinary logic of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. I remember that, when his predecessor was introducing his Bill, he explained that the pledges on which the hon. Gentlemen opposite had been returned to Parliament were of a kind which prevented any institution receiving public money, either from rates or from taxes, being outside popular control. What he said was—

> "After the date named, no elementary school shall receive a penny of public money either from rates or from taxes, unless it becomes a provided school within the meaning of the Education Acts. Unless'"—

I hope the right hon. Gentleman's successor will mark these words—

> "electoral promises and pledges are fustian and fudge, unless they are mere sound and fury, signifying nothing, no other clause than this is possible."

MR. McKENNA: The schools which I propose will not be provided schools.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: But they will get money from the taxes, and, what is more, probably their only source of revenue will come from the taxes. And does the right hon Gentleman say that they are going to be under public control?

MR. McKENNA: No, sir. The education given in them must conform to a standard laid down by the Board of Education. In no other respect will they be public elementary schools. In all other respects they will be, as, in my opinion, they are now and they ought to be, private institutions.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My question was this: They are institutions which do get money from taxes. Are they under public control?

MR. McKENNA was understood to say "No."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then the pledges of the right hon. Gentleman are fustian and fudge. I should not really complain of hon. Gentlemen opposite if I knew exactly what their principle was. I sometimes think they adapt their legislation to their electoral pledges, but still more often they adapt their electoral pledges to their legislation. I cannot quite make out whether this Bill is supposed to be in accordance with their electoral pledges or whether their electoral pledges, as interpreted by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor, have been modified so as to suit this Bill, though I rather think it is the latter. I do not complain of that, because this servitude to electoral pledges which hon. Gentlemen opposite profess when they have some proposal of more than usual enormity to bring before the country does certainly not make for their legislative independence; but if the Government have, as I gather they have, brought in this proposal with all that freedom which they now claim from their electoral pledges as previously interpreted, they might surely have brought in a measure which was not in such absolute and complete contradiction of every sound canon of religious liberty and of the free choice of parents, and of sound educational methods. Nothing can make this Bill a good educational measure. You sacrifice education absolutely to the violence of your religious prejudice, and to the desire to injure a Church to which you do not belong. In these circumstances it is quite impossible, even at this early stage of our discussions on this Bill, that I can promise the right hon. Gentleman smooth or easy progress in the task which he has undertaken.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I am sure that the last thing which my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education expected to receive from the Leader of the Opposition was the assurance that this Bill would have either a smooth or an easy passage. In that respect the concluding part of his speech does not in any way disappoint our expectations. But I think the right hon. Gentleman has been a little lavish, even for him, in the imputation of, I will not say dishonest, but certainly of discreditable, motives to his political opponents. I do not think I am doing an injustice to the right hon. Gentleman's speech when I say that the only two intentions with which he could credit us in introducing this measure are, first, to impair the educational efficiency of our schools, and next to deal, if we can, a side-blow to the Church of England. That was the sense in which the right hon. Gentleman's speech is understood and applauded by some at any rate of those who sit behind him.

It is not so much for the purpose, which I think would hardly be appropriate at this stage, when the Bill has not been printed or circulated, of discussing its details, but rather of dealing with the general propositions of the right hon. Gentleman that I have risen to make, with the indulgence of the House, two or three very brief observations in the way of reply, and I will endeavour to argue the matter with a little less heat than the right hon. Gentleman has imported into the debate. How do we stand in relation to this Bill? Am I not right in saying, and do I really not carry with me the assent of every man in this House who has thought the problem out when I say, that there are only three conceivable solutions of our educational difficulties? The first is the solution which the right hon. Gentleman himself adopted in the Act, 1902—namely, the giving of rate aid all round to every class of school. I confess I was a little amused with the right hon. Gentleman's glowing panegyric this afternoon on the great principle of local control. Rate aid, as we said in 1902, and as we repeated in those electoral pledges to which, I venture to say, we are showing the utmost fidelity to-day, carried with it local control. And what is the local control which the right hon. Gentleman gave? He pays a great deal of lip-service to the principle to-day for political purposes, but what was the actual homage he offered to it when he had to deal with it as an actual matter of legislative enactment? It amounts to a couple of representatives on the local authority and four denominational managers for dealing with those matters which were most vital to the prosperity and efficiency of the schools.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten the Act of 1902. That Act gave absolute control to the local authority in all matters of secular education.

MR. ASQUITH: What about the most important matter of all, the appointment of teachers, as to which not only had the local authority not supreme jurisdiction, but as to which these denominational managers were empowered by Act of Parliament to continue to impose denominational tests? It was on that ground that we fought the right hon. Gentleman in 1902, and, when we appealed to the country against his Act at the general election in 1906, the country returned an unhesitating verdict in condemnation of it. But when we dealt or attempted to deal with this matter in 1906 we took the Act of 1902 as it stood, and endeavoured to remedy that gross and grievous imperfection in it. And what was the result? The result was that after weeks and months of controversy we arrived at the issue that it was impossible to import into that Act or into any modification of that Act an effective system of local control worthy of the name which would at the same time be acceptable to and accepted by the denominations concerned. It was that that wrecked the Bill of 1906, and we are not going to repeat that experiment and tempt a second time the same disaster. Well, that is one solution—a solution that has been proved in practice to be impossible. What is the next solution? The next solution is the secular, which I admit to be a perfectly logical conception in theory, and to which it may be that in course of time—though I trust not—we in this country may be driven. But what are the reasons why neither this Government, nor, I venture to say, any other Government that held office by the support of the House of Commons, and in accordance with the decision of the electorate, can propose the secular solution? The reasons are two. In the first place, in the existing condition of opinion and sentiment in this country it is an impracticable solution. [Cries of "No."] Well, I venture to say that in the existing condition of opinion and sentiment in this country it is impracticable. And it is impracticable, or it is believed to be impracticable—which comes to the same thing when you are dealing with a matter of political practicability—for two reasons. In the first place, it is the opinion, I believe, of the great majority of our fellow-countrymen that you cannot segregate or isolate secular from religious teaching. *Expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* Where you are teaching history, where you are teaching literature, and where you are teaching ethics, where you are trying to lay down those rules of Christianity which are to mould the character of your children, the impalpable boundary line which separates secular from religious teaching is constantly crossed. And, further than that, the great majority of English parents do desire that in our public elementary schools the Bible should be taught, and that their children should have the opportunity not only of studying that which is the greatest masterpiece of English literature, to put it on no higher ground, but of learning a lesson which nowhere else can be so fully or so cogently or so impressively taught. You may like it or not. I am not arguing whether the majority of our fellow-countrymen are right or wrong, but I am confident that the great majority of Members on both sides of the House will agree with me that that does approximately represent what is at present—I do not say it will always continue to be—the dominating sentiment. If you put those two solutions on one side, what is left? I venture to say there is no other solution left but that proposed in the Bill of my right hon. friend. ["Oh, oh."] And what is that? It is that you should put within the reach—I will not discuss with the right hon. Gentleman what that expression precisely means, translated into geographical terms of the particular area, we know what it means approximately—that you should put within the reach of every child in this country a public elementary school supported by the taxes and by the rates, and which is to conform to certain conditions; and among those conditions is this, that in that school there is not to be taught the distinctive formulas of any religious denomination, but there may be taught—not must—if the local authority so wishes—the local authority, which is, after all, the best representative of the parents—there may be taught the special form of religious teaching which, as the experience of forty years has shown, is acceptable to so many, indeed the bulk, of the parents of this country. That is our first principle. The second principle of this Bill is that no rate aid is to be given to any school which does not conform to those conditions. I will deal in a moment with what I venture to regard as far the most important of the criticisms which the right hon. Gentleman has made—namely, the effect of this change upon educational efficiency. What are we going to do with that large mass of schools called by a strange misnomer voluntary schools? Well, leaving out of consideration the single-school areas, we provide that wherever there is a real demand from the parents, shown by an average attendance of not less than thirty children, and wherever (and this is most important) the conditions laid down by the Board of Education as to the maintenance of the proper standard of educational efficiency are complied with, these schools may continue to exist, not, indeed, as rate-supported institutions, and not, therefore, subject to the obligation of local control, because rate aid and local control are in our view corollaries one of the other. I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman means by public control. They will be under the control of the Board of Education.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: May I ask whether the Board of Education is going to appoint the teachers?

MR. ASQUITH: No, certainly not.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought that in your view that was necessary to control.

MR. ASQUITH: Yes, when the ratepayers are contributing their money for the support of their children we have always said that the representatives of the ratepayers ought to be allowed to have a voice in the appointment of the teachers. I am dealing now simply with the conditions under which the Parliamentary grant always has been given before the right hon. Gentleman introduced the rate aid, and I will read the exact words of the Bill—

> "The school is to be open to the inspection of the Board of Education, and all such conditions of efficiency as regards teaching staff, school premises, and secular instruction as are required by the Board of Education in public elementary schools——"

that is, in the schools of the local authorities, all those conditions are to be complied with. Therefore these schools cannot continue to receive the Parliamentary grant. They cannot continue in existence unless they are maintained at an educational standard as high as that maintained in the public elementary schools. And that is the real answer to the right hon. Gentleman's criticism that we are dealing a blow at the educational efficiency of our schools. Let me add, before I pass from that, that these schools will receive a grant which is not to exceed 47s., and it will be in the vast majority of cases a substantial addition to the Parliamentary grant already enjoyed. They will retain complete autonomy with regard to the management and to the appointment of teachers, and, subject only to those conditions of educational efficiency, they will be, so far as the Parliamentary grant is concerned, in a better pecuniary position than they are to-day.

Now I come to the other class of schools with which the right hon. Gentleman dealt in the earlier part of his speech, I mean those of the single-school areas. My right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education quoted an admission of the right hon. Gentleman, made only last year or the year before, to the effect that the Nonconformist parent in these parishes has a substantial grievance. The right hon. Gentleman said he did something to satisfy or remove that. There may be one or two cases in some parts of the country, but I am not acquainted with a single case in which the remedy kindly provided by the right hon. Gentleman has proved efficacious and for the simple reason—and it is a very good reason—that in most of these cases it would be a ridiculous thing to have two schools. There is not room for two schools, and to throw upon the parish in this comparative small and impoverished area the duty of building a new school is to make a perfectly nugatory offer. I am going to point out to the House in a moment, by way of contrast, the way in which we are making a real, genuine, honest, and sincere attempt to deal with the religious grievances of those who are supporters of voluntary schools. What will be the state of things in those single parishes? First of all, the proposed compulsory transfer only applies to schools which have what the Bill describes as "limited trusts"—that is to say, educational trusts—trusts of which the primary purpose is education. Where those conditions exist and the local authority moves in the matter and makes an application, the Board of Education may vest the schoolhouse in the local authority without payment, and the local authority may use it without payment during five days of the week for the purpose of giving secular instruction—if it pleases, of giving Cowper-Temple instruction; and if the trustees, through whom the transfer is made, insist, they may compel, as one of the conditions of transfer, the local authority to give Cowper-Temple instruction just the same as it is given in the provided school.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): What does that actually mean?

MR. ASQUITH: I will read the exact language of the schedule, because I agree that Cowper-Temple instruction is a very elastic phrase. This is an undertaking which the trustees may exact from the local authority as one of the conditions of transfer—an undertaking—

> "To provide such religious instruction as may be specified by the trustees and is in accordance with the London County Council's syllabus, contained in a Return at the order of the House of Lords, ordered to be printed on 19th June, 1906."

That is a very familiar document. That is not all, and here I come to what I consider the real contrast between the right hon. Gentleman's method of dealing with this grievance and our method of dealing with it. Not only on the other two days of the week are the denomination to have the use of the building, maintained, repaired, warmed, cleaned, and lighted, for their own denominational purposes, but on the five days on which the school is being used by the local authority for the purpose of a public elementary school the managers and trustees may make it one of the conditions of transfer that another undertaking should be given that—perhaps I had better again read in the words of the Bill—an undertaking—

> "To put the schoolhouse, properly cleaned, warmed, and lighted, at the disposal of the trustees for the purpose of being used by them or under their authority on Saturdays and Sundays, and for the giving of any religious instruction consistent with the trust deeds affecting the schoolhouses immediately before or after any meeting of the school. No teachers employed by the authority are to be permitted to give that instruction."

So that ample facilities may be required if the trustees desire it for giving religious instruction to the denomination immediately before or immediately after any of the hours of school on any of the five days in the week. Now I say that is a liberal provision. The right hon. Gentleman tried to represent it as something in the nature of confiscation or high-handedness, but I say it is a liberal and generous provision on the part of the State, which takes over from the trustees, at its own expense, the whole burden of maintaining those buildings, which carries on at its own expense that part of the trust which relates to secular education, and which, so far as the remainder of the trust is concerned, gives the trustees the fullest possible facilities for performing the duties themselves. I am not afraid of the right hon. Gentleman's epithets. I venture to think that in the course of the next week, when the people of the country fairly and deliberately consider the provisions which we have made, they will say in the first place that we have carried out strictly and literally our pledge that where local contribution is made local control shall follow; secondly, that we have properly established one type and one type only of public elementary school, to which, henceforth, every child in the country shall have the right to resort, and except to which no child shall be compelled by law to go; and, finally, that we have recognised the continued existence of these voluntary schools, and that in all matters essential to the performance of their religious trusts we have treated them with consideration and even with generosity.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): In judging of the proposals of the Government much will depend upon the details of the Bill, and I hope that it will be in our hands in the course of a day or two. As to how far the Government proposals will carry out the principles enunciated this afternoon one prefers to wait until the Bill is in one's hands before entering upon criticism in detail. As to the increased financial aid to be given to the local authorities by the Treasury, that is a claim we have been making upon the Treasury for a good number of years. I am not quite sure whether the remark I heard made by an hon. friend when the right hon. Gentleman was detailing his scheme, that this extra financial aid will be a most admirable coating of sugar to the pill which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to administer by the other parts of his Bill, was right or not, but it will help the opponents of the proposals to swallow them. Nor am I sure whether another remark is true or not, namely, that a large number of parents consider finance of much more importance than religious instruction, but there is no doubt that the financial clauses of the Bill will be universally welcomed, and will be a great grant in aid of the other clauses of the Bill which, if allowed to stand alone, perhaps would not have been quite so acceptable to the people of the country. But on the general principle of the Bill I am not quite sure that I am so hopeful as the right hon. Gentleman. I know that the right hon. Gentleman was somewhat prophetical; he told us with a great deal of optimism, both in phrase and style, that he hoped his Bill was going to settle the religious difficulty. I listened with a great deal of expectation after that statement to find out what the Bill was going to be, and when I discovered that after all it was nothing—always leaving the financial clauses out of account—but an attempt to restore the ante-1902 conditions, I wondered from what source his optimism came. Surely the right hon. Gentleman must have been aware when he was drafting his Bill that every objection which was taken by the denominationalists to the conditions which existed prior to 1902 will be taken to the conditions which are existing in 1909, if this Bill should become an Act of Parliament. There are two great classes in the community who will object to the Bill. First of all, there are the educationists who do not care very much about denominational instruction, and who say to all religious sects, "A plague on all your houses and your barren controversies about your religious difficulties." They will describe the Bill as a contracting-out Bill; they will regard these voluntary schools as schools to which a number of parents will send their children in spite of the inefficient education supplied by them, and they will, therefore, condemn these schools and they will not accept this Bill as in any way a solution of the educational problem they are trying so solve. The second section who will object to this Bill are the denominationalists. They are not a small section of the community. The denominationalists were the cause of the Bill of 1902 to which so many of us objected, and what hope is there that the opposition on the part of the parents who desire a voluntary school for their children and on the part of clergymen who desire to keep alive the agitation in favour of voluntary schools, will cease altogether? What hope is there that after 1908 the agitation will cease, and that we shall have heard the last of this abominable and disgraceful religious strife in a field where it ought not to be heard at all? The moment the Bill is passed, all the forces that started in 1873, which gathered in volume up to 1902, and were ultimately successful for the time being in 1902, will begin to come into operation, and the teachers and managers, the child and the parent, indeed our whole educational system, will be open to the same attacks and to the same feverish excitement, and the same spirit of unsettlement as that which has gone on with such disaster during the past 100 years. There I come back to the position with which my hon. friends here are associated and with which the House is quite familiar. I regret, and a great many Members of this House will regret, that the Government has not boldly faced the secular solution. The right hon. Gentleman has once more replied to the secular position by saying that it is logical. It is very easy to reply when you create your own argument in order to knock it down. We do not stand by the secular solution simply because it is logical. It is logical undoubtedly, but I have yet to learn that it is a mark of inferiority, from the practical point of view, that politicians should occasionally trust to logic in the drafting of their measures and making their proposals. Is the right hon. Gentleman going to tell us that one of the qualifications of his Bill—one of the commendations of his Bill—is that it is an irrational and illogical measure; that it has got neither rhyme nor reason in it, and that it is not drafted for the purpose of being applied to the practical experience and to the educational difficulties of the country? If not, I wish to know why by simply calling it logical it is relegated to something in the impractical category? We are in favour of the secular solution because it is practical. There is no stronger evidence of the truth of our position than the admission the right hon. Gentleman's Bill makes regarding the single school districts. In a single school district every parent who desires denominational education is being forced to accept the secular solution. At the present moment in your single school districts you have your voluntary school attached, say, to the Church of England. That school has to be wrenched from the Church of England. The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that the trustees may impose on the local authority as one of the conditions of the transfer that Cowper-Templeism may be taught at the schools, but many members of the Church of England extend their religious opposition to Cowper-Templeism on the ground that it is denominationalism. I know that the right hon. Gentleman repudiates that and says that is not his view, but he is not the parent of every child who attends all the rural schools. If you are going to take the parents' view of this matter you are going to do it in an objective way. It is not our business to tell the parents what they ought to regard as denominationalism or non-denominationalism. It is our business as the House of Commons to act as judges, to hear the evidence, and to accept the statements made by the parents. The statement made is that Cowper-Templeism is denominationalism. Therefore the transference from Church of England control of those endowed schools in single school areas is nothing but the transference of these schools from one kind of denominationalism to another. If the parents do not agree to that denominationalism they have got to withdraw their children from the religious instruction given in the schools, and are tempted to do so by offers of denominational instruction out of school hours. Therefore my statement is absolutely correct that the Government are offering as a practical solution under such circumstances the secular solution. What is the objection of the Government to applying this admirable solution of the religious difficulty in the single school areas to all other areas and so settling the matter? After the proposal which the Government have made, I hope they will never again say that the country is not ripe for secular education, because, whether ripe or not, they are imposing it on a large number of very worthy parents and offering them facilities for religious instruction out of school hours. The question is much larger. We are told about practical proposals. Does anyone who is aware of the history of education during the last hundred years, of the interminable squabbles, of the proposals made to establish popular education, and of the counter proposals that have been made, of the trouble between nonconformist and conformist reaching up to the present moment—does anyone who knows all that history mean to say that we have been going on practical lines? During these hundred years so far as the religious controversy is concerned, every proposal made, every experiment started, and every method of construction followed, has had to end as regards too many of them in disgrace, because the statesmen of the day did not face the religious problem in a logical and practical way. Here in the beginning of 1908, with a hundred years experience behind us, the Government's practical solution is to establish a state of things which came to an end in 1902, because it was proved that it could not work in practical experience. I would very respectfully suggest to my right hon. friend that he should revise his meaning of the word "practical" in the light of facts and experience in educational matters for the last hundred years. I should also like to know whether we are now going to increase the Exchequer grant for voluntary schools and public schools alike. There is to be more public money spent on voluntary schools than was spent in 1902. I fail absolutely to see the difference between rate aid and Exchequer aid so far as public control is concerned. Let us take a supreme test. Are you going to allow voluntary school managers to appoint teachers on denominational tests? If so what becomes of the pledge given to the country that the teachers in the schools maintained by public money are not to be allowed to be submitted to denominational tests? I think that point is worthy of a fuller answer than that given to it by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I quite see the force of the right hon. Gentleman's reply, so far as the managers are concerned, but I am not prepared to waive the point in regard to the teachers. The teachers in the voluntary schools ought to be chosen just as they are in other schools—on account of their qualifications as teachers, and on these alone. The matter is left a little bit indefinite in my own mind; but perhaps before the debate closes we will have a further statement from the right hon. Gentleman. Are the teachers going to be appointed as prior to 1902, simply on denominational lines, and with denominational qualifications? If so, I ask, Is this an admission on the part of the Government that the parents have a right to get their children educated in their own denominational creeds? Sometimes it seems to me as if that is the case, and sometimes that it is not. If it is, then what is the objection to the Amendment of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone? If we are to have the parents consulted, why not consult them altogether and thoroughly? I am not quite sure whether the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone is going to move his Amendment, but if he is, is he going to accept the position that secularists and positivists are also to be allowed to have their children educated by the local education authority in the tenets of Auguste Comte or Charles Bradlaugh, or any other authorised exponent of secularism or positivism? Parental right carries you much further than you conceive. Surely, so far as Parliament is concerned, what we have got to do is to demand and insist on a higher standard of secular instruction. Is it true, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out, that you cannot dissociate secular education from faith in State education? It is perfectly true that you cannot teach the history of, say, Queen Mary on the same lines to Protestants and Catholics. In the one case that sovereign is called "Bloody Mary," and in the other "Saint Mary." If spiritual life transfuses itself through history, why do you go and cut off three-quarters of an hour in the morning from the regular school work to reading the Scriptures without proper explanation and without religious reverence? I do not propose to say anything about the details of the measure. When the Second Reading comes on, or better still, when the Bill is in Committee, will be time to consider these. At the present moment I desire to enter my protest against the assumption that by talking of this secular solution as being only logical you settle the education question for ever. I say that Ministers have yielded the main part of the secular solution in their proposals, regarding the single school areas; and if they are wise, before the Bill is printed they should take the opportunity of applying the same idea to districts that are not single-school areas.

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.): With most of the hon. Members who have sat through the discussion I find myself filled with great admiration from what I have heard, combined with a feeling of disagreement with much that has been said from both sides of the House. I am so worried—most of us are so worried—by this long and squalid controversy; so convinced are we of the evil that it is doing to religious life; and so jealous of the time which is given to it which should be given to carrying out some scheme of social reform, that I for one would be prepared to accept almost any solution offered us so long as that solution followed on certain lines. It must make for educational efficiency, it must be on general terms, it must be liberal, it must have some reasonable chance of passing through both Houses of Parliament and of making some kind of peace in the country. I have been asking myself, as clause after clause has been so ably expounded by the right hon. Gentleman, how far this particular Bill could be said to conform to those particular tenets? I confess to agreement in part with the hon. Member for Leicester. I will say nothing for the moment of its chances of passing through both Houses of Parliament. Let me be quite clear on one point. An Education Bill is absolutely inevitable at this moment. Whether some of the largest changes in the Bill objected to by the Leader of the Opposition be valid or not, I am heart and soul with the Bill—I put aside the question of its drafting now—that the question of the single-school areas is in a position which we cannot possibly leave in its present state. It must be dealt with as soon as possible. Everyone on this side of the House and a large number on the other side are agreed on that point, and if this Bill merely consisted of a fairly drastic provision for establishing a public elementary school which would be at the service of every child and every parent in England, I should not dream of offering opposition to it. I believe that is a principle which can be defended before any honest and impartial man, whatever his religious belief may be. It is a principle, however, which cannot prove a final solution of the education question, but it will afford a large interim measure of relief for a situation which at the present time in the villages of England is quite impossible. Let me point out a fallacy in the statement that was made two years ago by the Leader of the Opposition, as to the balance of injustice in the rural districts in regard to Church schools and Cowper-Temple schools. There are no Cowper-Temple schools in any rural district. Every school not under limitations must have six Church managers, and every teacher must be a churchman or churchwoman, and therefore such schools have the full denominational or Church management which is secured to schools privately managed at the present time. It is perfectly true that Cowper-Temple teaching can be given; but it is not the religious teaching in the rural schools that is the vital point in this grievous controversy. It is the management of the schools. It is the accepting of public aid from all religious denominations combined with limitation of service to members of one denomination only. That is utterly indefensible and ought to be remedied as speedily as possible, and if this Bill set itself to remedy it, it might have been remedied if the Bill had contained nothing else. But the Bill contains another principle—the principle of contracting out. I remember in the long and dreary controversy of two years ago, the sudden appearance, well on in the Committee stage, after sixteen days discussion, of a clause bound round with a very peculiar and complete qualification, but which would have led, under certain difficulties, to a limited number of schools being passed under that system which is now offered. I remember the distrust with which that suggestion was received by the hon. Gentleman who was then my leader to a large extent in the education controversy—the hon. Member for Camberwell. And that hon. Gentleman enlisted me in a kind of crusade against that particular clause. Although I had no capacity for imitating the violence of his invective, which hon. Members may study for themselves in the volumes of *Hansard*, I did my humble best to express a similar condemnation, which had nothing to do with the religious point of view, but entirely from the educational point of view, in regard to contracting out. I remember that the Minister in charge of the Bill, now Chief Secretary for Ireland, expressed himself as utterly ashamed of the clause, and how his contention was that the whole educational opinion of the country would resist the abandonment of perhaps the only good thing in the Act of 1902—that was the unification of the educational system under one education authority, whether elective board or municipal council. But here you have contracting out in its full essence. I shall be corrected by the Parliamentary Secretary if I am wrong, for I do not understand the whole provision of contracting out, but I understand that any manager of a denominational school may contract out so as long as he can get thirty parents to support him in doing so. But apparently there is no kind of poll as there was in the Bill of 1906. With regard to the grant, I do not object to the grant of 47s. a child if the educational efficiency of the school is to be maintained at the standard now prevailing in the non provided schools, which means that if your teachers are to be paid anything but starvation wages, that 47s. has to be supplemented by something between 10s. and 12s. and in some cases 16s. per child extra. What I want to ask is where is that money coming from? It means in quite small schools £400 or £500 a year, and we come back again to the system which we have heard denounced again and again in this House of supporting national education by the old-fashioned system of bazaars and jumble sales, and the unclean combination of jugglery and charity Are we to have any guarantee given to the teachers that this money will be spent? If we are to have no guarantee that the teachers shall be paid at the same rate as in the provided school, or that the same amount shall be paid per child as in the provided school, we go back to the position which, to a certain extent, we had before 1902, but with that position intensified by the educational advance that has been made since 1902, and all these unfortunate teachers will be offered the option of having lower salaries paid them or leaving the school and going elsewhere. That is not a position consistent with

Mr. Masterman.

the demand of a Liberal Minister for educational efficiency. It is an abandonment in despair of the ideal of a unified educational system, in face of the rivalry of various religious bodies in this country. Although my words are useless, I do venture to ask very respectfully that, if any large body of general opinion in this country, representing those men and women to whom the Minister for Education paid such a high tribute, and not too high, those who care for education in this particular province, express some grave disapprobation of these contracting out clauses, the right hon. Gentleman will see fit to withdraw them. There is the religious side of this question also. It has been put by the Leader of the Opposition very definitely. We definitely say to these people, "We provide an efficient state of national teaching and simple Christian teaching in all the schools"—a teaching against which I have never said anything; a teaching which I do not agree with the hon. Member for Leicester in deprecating; I think it is thoroughly admirable and desirable for the children—"but if you do not like that teaching" we say, "if you have even conscientious objections to that teaching, you may have your own teaching in other schools, but in those other schools your secular education shall be starved and impaired, and we will take good care that the utmost pressure is put upon you to squeeze you into our particular scheme of religious teaching." I do not think that that will be an efficient mode, because those particular classes who care, particularly the smaller bodies of Irish Catholics in big cities, are not going to be squeezed into simple Protestant teaching, even if it means the sacrifice of educational efficiency. But I do not want by this protest to lay great stress on that religious side; it is on the educational side I am making my protest to-day. I was told by an hon. Member that it was no use protesting against this, because some particular Church or another had been squared on the question. I do not care if every Church in Christendom has been squared on this question, unless we can have clearly placed before us in the provisions of the Bill a definite assertion that these non-provided schools shall spend a similar amount per child and pay their teachers at a similar rate to the provided schools, I shall oppose this contracting out. I need not tell the Minister for Education, for he knows as well as I do, how much in addition to this 10s. or 12s. we stand to lose. All that we have been doing in the last five or six years stands to be lost by this separating of the schools, because we have been weaving them together so that pupils go to the cookery schools from provided and non-provided schools alike. The whole value of what we have been engaged in doing and have been encouraged to do during this five or six years is the bringing together of the two systems which are absolutely apart, because we believe that so much can be done if these systems are brought together as far as possible. I notice that the Minister for Education alluded to to the Bill of the Chief Secretary for Ireland with very scanty support or enthusiasm on this side of the House, and said, I have no doubt sincerely, that it was a courageous and in many respects a satisfactory attempt to solve the question, and it was a disaster that it failed. I think it was a disaster that it failed. At the end I was an earnest supporter of it, though I had occasion, through the indulgence of the House, to make some criticisms upon it. It was very far indeed, however, from anything I desired as an ultimate settlement of the education question, but it did give that one point which we are not going to get in this Bill, that you obtained some form of popular control in every school and a similar amount guaranteed by the State, from whatever source, to be spent on every child, poor or rich, Catholic or Anglican or atheist, served by the national system of education. There is one other point which I think is worth considering in connection with this Bill. If it passes, in all our large and populous centres there will be a series of schools which will be protesting themselves to be starved schools, and yet will be guaranteed by the Board of Education as being efficient. The parents will be stirred up into believing that they are suffering from injustice. It is easy to contend that they are not suffering from an injustice if you say that they all ought to be in the popular central schools which you say are neutral in religious matters, and you can squeeze them into those schools; but so long as you are giving the peculiar aroma and flavour of what the Chief Secretary for Ireland called simple Protestant teaching in these schools, I do not see what right you have to squeeze the poorer Catholics or any other denomination into them. How is that situation to be faced when it passes from the controversy in this House to the country? At every by-election and general election in large towns the parents of the children in these starved schools and their friends will simply put one question, and this is the only question which will arouse their interest: "Will you vote for a fair contribution to our children as compared with the children in the schools for which we are rated outside our own denomination?" I should like to ask some of my hon. friends who are not agreed with me, and for whose kindly attention I am grateful on this occasion, how are they prepared to answer that question when it passes from the comparatively calm debates in this House to the depths of political controversy outside? I may be told, and it is an easy retort, that nothing is easier than criticism, and nothing is harder than constructive policy. I have stated what might be regarded as affording a possibility of the only practical policy that I think is open under present conditions, and that is the provision of a public locally managed school within the reach of every parent who desires it in town or in country. I may go further, if I may, and be perfectly candid, and say that I think the proposals which the Minister of Education makes to-day with regard to the question of religious education in the village schools are the only proposals which are practicable under present conditions. I think that if what is called secular education, but what I call neutrality of the State. is to come, as it will come, the village schools are about the last places where the experiment should be tried. It is perfectly impossible to imagine, at least I have never found any conceivable method of imagining, that in the village schools, often with only one teacher, you can provide various forms of religious teaching, and as, after all, in every village in England the majority of those who object to what is called Cowper-Temple teaching, which is now known as the London County Council teaching, have always some representative who can give the children the religious teaching they desire, in or out of school hours, as the case may be, I think it is probably only fair that the "residuum or modicum of religious teaching" which is laid down by the London County Council might justifiably be allowed for the local authority to administer to those who desire it, under a stringent conscience clause in the rural areas. That, I think, as an avowed advocate of secular education, although I desire not to quarrel with the Government more than is possible, is the only thing that can possibly be done under present circumstances. I think part of their proposal is an abandonment of educational efficiency in towns, and is foredoomed to failure; I can only hope that if it is withdrawn it will be withdrawn upon our own initiative, and that other people will not get the credit of destroying such a thing as that. For the rest I think we must wait until there ripens a public opinion, as there is a ripening among hundreds and thousands of people every week, towards an educational settlement which my right hon. friend the Minister of Education apparently regards with alarm, but which I view with the utmost satisfaction, and which every community with similar divisions and sentiments to ourselves throughout the civilised world has been compelled to adopt. The only practical solution is that we should confine ourselves to the administration of an efficient secular system of education, leaving it to the members of the Churches in conjunction with the parents of the children who desire it to say how much more instruction of a religious nature shall be given. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think, with some sympathy towards us, told us that we could have no secular system because religion was interwoven in the ordinary curriculum of every school. We acknowledge that, and I acknowledge it fully, but already the State recognises the distinction in the provision of the conscience clause under which the child of the atheist can withdraw himself from religious instruction, although apparently it may be biassed by passing through the other instruction. We do not want to avoid the influence of that. It will be a long day before the people of this country wish to avoid the religious instruction which children draw during their daily hours of teaching. That will continue in our secular system as it exists to-day in every Anglo-Saxon community in the world (cries of "No.") That is the result of my communications, and I believe it is true. Where the parents are religious and the teachers are religious their religion expresses itself, and is conveyed to the child even under a system where there are no religious tests. We shall, when the occasion arises, ask that small company which two years ago voted for the secular system, and any recruits who may be obtained, once more to declare themselves in favour of the solution which, I believe, to be comportable with religion, and the only solution which is just and fair.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): The House always listens to the speeches of the hon. Member with sympathy and interest, but I confess there are Members here who will, like myself, have some difficulty in appreciating the connection between the earlier parts of his speech with the vehement and eloquent advocacy of that which he calls the neutral solution in the latter part. He is prepared to accept that portion of the Government scheme which deals with the villages. He is prepared to accept the establishment and endowment of a religious teaching according to its acceptability to the London County Council. That seems to me to be an astonishing position for the hon. Gentleman to take up, who concludes by saying he desires to be neutral to all religions. I will not say much about the earlier solution at this moment. I do not believe it is within the sphere of practical politics at the present time, and I have never been able to see why its advocates regard it as more fair and more just than any other solution. It seems to me that in the secular solution you are favouring one portion of the population at the expense of the other. You are favouring a full education at the State expense for all those who do not desire a religious education, and you are not favouring a full education at the State expense for all those who do desire a religious education, and whether you regard this from the point of view of the Church or the point of view of the various sects you are wholly failing to hold the scales of justice even. This Bill, as I understand it, is fundamentally undenominational. All public elementary schools are to be subject to the Cowper-Temple clause. In addition to this there is the further condition that under no circumstances are steps to be taken to test the religious efficiency of the teacher who is to give the religious teaching of the London County Council. He may be a Mahomedan, or a Jew, or an atheist, yet he is to be entrusted with the London County Council syllabus without any test being applied to his fitness for the duty. The House should bear in mind the recent policy of the Government with regard to training colleges. The tendency of Ministers has been to discourage denominational training in the colleges, and incontestably we have to face a future where the teachers, in place of their being thoroughly well trained in some definite form of religion, will come to their work without having received any training of that kind. This Bill is more undenominational than anything that at present exists. But then the Chancellor of the Exchequer says: "Look at the generous facilities we have given in the single school areas." I venture to say that no one who has any real experience of practical work in education in those areas will dispute the statement that I now make, that those concessions are absolutely illusory. Consider what is being done. Denominational teaching is put into a category by itself, different from all other forms of teaching given in the school. It is not to be given in school hours, and the parents are therefore in a position to prevent their children attending; it is not to be given by the teacher on the staff, and the children are led to believe that it is a secondary and less important part of education. I need not discuss it. A syllabus of that kind will not be worse than useless, but it is really absolutely useless. That is in the rural schools. When we come to the urban schools there is the contracting out, and here I do not quite understand who is to settle whether the school is to be contracted out or not. Is it the managers or the trustees who are to contract out if thirty children attend the school? But there is another provision which appears to me to put the contracting out into a highly dangerous position. There is no security that this extra grant will be made from year to year. It all rests on the absolute *ipse dixit* of the existing Minister for Education. It is not in the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said so himself. If I so understand him, he said it was not in the Bill, but was to be made by a Parliamentary grant. That being so, a Parliamentary grant may be withdrawn at any moment.

Mr. McKENNA : I stated that it is not in the Bill as regards the grant for local education. It is in the Bill so far as the voluntary schools are concerned; it is in the usual Parliamentary language and states that the charge is not to exceed 47s. per child.

Lord R. CECIL : That makes all the difference, because we know the right hon. Gentleman, is not slow to set aside Acts of Parliament, and we should like to see him very closely tied and bound before we trusted him in this matter; this is a purely undenominational Bill and the denominational concessions seem to be utterly futile. Let me say a word or two as to denominational instruction. I wish to ask hon. Members what they really conceive to be the object of religious instruction in the schools? I know it is a question I have no right to ask them, but is it that they wish to teach religion in the schools; and, if so, I venture to ask what they mean by religion? Many undenominationalists advocate other remedies from the point of view of what they conceive to be the real purpose of religious teaching, namely, morality. I do not wish to say a word against moral teaching, but moral teaching is not the same as religious teaching. The right hon. Gentleman received a deputation not very long ago, in reply to which he said he was in favour of simple Bible teaching, and that was his objection to the secular solution. Then he said that the teachers of the country were so familiar with the Bible as a text book for morals that they could not take the Bible from the schools. That was the reason the right hon. Gentleman gave. I believe that is a fundamental idea. I believe you can no more teach Christian morals without the Bible than you can get fruit from a tree without roots. But if you are going to teach religion do not deceive the people by saying to them, "We are going to give your children religious teaching" when you really mean to teach them morals. The hon. Member for North West Ham spoke of the residuum of common Christianity.

Mr. MASTERMAN : That was not my phrase. It was a quotation.

Lord R. CECIL : I am sorry I had forgotten it was a quotation, but what is the residuum of common Christianity? Is that the Christianity approved by the London County Council? Common Christianity is a question upon which Christendom has disputed for centuries, and it is reserved for a few gentlemen elected to the London County Council in March last together with a few co-opted members to settle finally. I shall be very curious to hear what the Nonconformists say about that, because they reject a much less important document. The Apostles Creed is rejected by them as a proper statement of undenominational Christianity. [Cheers.] I am delighted to hear those cheers, because the hon. Member has in his mind no doubt what I have in mine. It appears that the Preston Education Authority, which had not had the opportunity of consulting the London County Council on the matter, had put its hand to a syllabus which was very offensive to the Nonconformists of the district, and a deputation waited on the right hon. Gentleman in respect to the matter. What was their objection? They say this: Our objections are not merely confined to the Creed—that is, the Apostles' Creed—but extend to any religious teaching as necessarily sectarian and dogmatic. Are we to believe that any teaching that is allowed by the London County Council is not sectarian or dogmatic, and that all sectarian and dogmatic teaching is confined to the Apostles' Creed? It appears to me that hon. Gentlemen who have expressed strong opinions will have some difficulty in reconciling their views to those of the right hon. Gentleman. The difficulty of finding out what is common Christianity is insuperable, and you do not simplify it by calling it simple Bible teaching. All denominations have consistently desired simple Bible teaching. I have no right to speak for Roman Catholics, but I think even they would say their religion is founded upon the Bible. I think a common saying among them is, "The Church to teach, the Bible to prove." The Church of England is absolute upon the matter. She says the Bible is the whole thing, the Bible contains all. Simple Bible teaching is what all denominations desire to give their children, but unfortunately for that great desire Christendom has never been agreed as to what simple Bible teaching is, and it is only the London County Council and the Gentlemen on the Ministerial Benches who really know. When we come to Bible criticism the difficulty is intensified. We have the Rationals in Germany and Mr. Campbell at the City Temple. They have found out what is the true essence of the Bible! How can you possibly arrive at an agreement between the German Rationals, who reject all that is miraculous in the Bible and the Roman Catholics, who accept it? There is no real common denominator. It is a delusion of politicians to assume that there is a common denominator. Look, they say, at the last thirty-eight years. What is the foundation on which the favourable view of those thirty-eight years rest? The Cowper-Temple Clause. What is the real foundation for the belief that Cowper-Temple teaching has been a success? I am told that the parents have never objected. But they have never objected either to the denominational teaching. Only a very small number of parents of the children in the schools have objected. If you ask the managers you will find that the vast mass of the parents have never withdrawn their children from denominational schools. The truth is that the parents accept what the authority pleases to give them, not because the authority represents the parent; that is the kind of thing which would only deceive the House of Commons. Ask the parents in the villages whether the London County Council education represents any article of their faith. No; the truth is the parents who are not wealthy have no other resource open to them. They must take that or nothing. If they do not like to take the religious education which is given in the schools their only resource is to withdraw their children from religious education altogether. But they would rather have some religion than none. That is true. But to say they have objection to this particular form of religious teaching is stating other than the fact. I wish to call the attention of the House to the actual test in the result. The object of religious teaching is to produce religious men and women. Are the men and women of the present day, who have been exposed to this teaching, religious? Let me remind the House of the very interesting inquiry instituted by Mr. Charles Booth all through London by means of trained investigators as to the religious condition of the people. He found a certain amount of religion in what he calls the wealthy classes, and in what he calls the upper middle classes. Even in the lower middle class there is some "scattered about." That is Mr. Booth's own phrase. But when he came to the working classes he says that they remain outside all religious bodies. [An Hon. Member: What about the Roman Catholics?] He makes an exception with regard to the Roman Catholics, I admit. Now these are the people who have been subjected to Cowper-Temple teaching, so that when it is said that Cowper-Temple teaching has been for thirty-eight years a success it cannot have been tested by that standard. We say that the Cowper-Temple clause has been a success because a vast mass of people can read and write, and have derived a large amount of secular knowledge, but as a religious education it has not been at all a success.

Mr. MASTERMAN: Has the Church teaching been any better?

Lord R. CECIL: I think it has, and I will tell the hon. Member why. There is a curious passage in Mr. Booth's book—I am sorry I have not the book with me—in which he says that the people who come up from the country are usually more religious than the people whom he finds in the towns. Now from the country they generally come from denominational schools, in the towns they are educated in the Cowper-Temple schools. I do not believe in this attempt to make a compromise between all religions. Whatever may be said as to a minimum wage, I believe the theory of a minimum religion to be thoroughly unsound. The truth is hon. Members are misled by treating religion as if it was an exact science. It is as though six artists were employed to draw each a picture of their conception of a man. It is quite true that a good deal would be found in the pictures so made that was common, but if any one tried to combine the six and regard the product as a true representation of man the only result would be a blurred and indistinct outline. I agree with the hon. Members for Leicester and North West Ham in so far as I agree that the only remedy is to teach no religion or all religions. In my argument, however, I reject the solution that you should teach no religion. I think you ought to teach the children the religion the parents desire them to be taught. I am not afraid of the dilemma in which the hon. Member for Leicester finds himself. He asks, would you teach Positivism? Certainly I would, if there were a certain number of persons who desired that it should be taught. I would not teach the religion of the Thugs, but so long as the religions were moral and in accordance with the law, and I accept this fully, all religions should be taught equally by the State, and there should be no preference, privilege, or advantage given by the State to one religion more than to the others.

Colonel SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): By the teachers?

Lord R. CECIL: Certainly; but I cannot go into the details. The hon. Gentleman must not ask me to draw up an Education Bill at this moment. There is no difficulty in the matter. The hon. Member for Camberwell has used very strong language indeed on the subject. He says the only difficulty which presents itself to him is the practical difficulty. There is no practical difficulty in such a system. It is the system in vogue already in the workhouses and the industrial schools, and in Germany and Switzerland, and a number of other countries, and what is done in other countries and in some of our colonies is not impracticable in England. I have no desire to deal with it in detail, but I do desire to deal with one particular point. It is said that by dividing the children into pens you will create an infinite number of religious differences. I do not think the cause of religious difficulty is the exposing of our children to education in our particular faith. The causes of religious difficulties are endless. I believe that if all children were brought up to hold deeply the religion which they were taught, to be as good members as possible of the sections to which they belonged, much of the religious difficulty would be lost. I am quite sure that this Bill will never settle the education question. The only sound principle is to allow the parent to choose for his children the religious instruction that he prefers; and the attempt to offer—with an ingenuity not uncharacteristic of the right hon. Gentleman—a bribe to the local authorities to induce the parents to abandon their religious beliefs will certainly fail, and is not altogether creditable. Many Members certainly feel that the only solution is that which was recommended by the present Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the President of the Free Church Council in 1904; a solution which was founded on justice and equality for all religions is the only one which the House ought to consider on this occasion.

Mr. PERKS (Lincolnshire, Louth): I do not think it is at all necessary to deal with the somewhat controversial subject which the noble Lord has just been handling, because as practical people it must be evident that we cannot possibly provide for the teaching in elementary schools of the numerous diverse religions which are accepted in this country. This Bill, which has been so clearly explained by the Minister for Education, is certainly not a measure, as the noble Lord thinks, framed in the interests of Nonconformity. I remember the late Minister for Education, when he was speaking on the final disappearance of the Education Bill, on 20th December, 1906, told us that that Bill was not the measure which the country wished for, and that if the country had had its own way and the Government had brought in a measure meeting the wishes of the country it would have contained in it nothing of Clause 4 and very little of Clause 3. The Government had therefore been long engaged in passing through this House and endeavouring to get their supporters to accept a measure which they subsequently very frankly admitted, in two of its most controversial sections and perhaps its two most important sections, the country did not desire. The question we have now to put is this, "Does the present Bill fulfil the demands of the country." I think the Government have exercised an extremely wise discretion in postponing the discussion of this Bill until we have safely carried through this House the Licensing measure to be submitted on Thursday, because that will give the various organisations in the country, educational, religious, and political, an opportunity of carefully considering this Bill, the result of which must depend very much on the details which we have not got before us. We are told that the Government have endeavoured to draft this Bill, bearing constantly in mind two principles, first, the principle of public control of all elementary schools, and secondly, the relief of teachers from sectarian tests. It is extremely doubtful, apart altogether from the provisions of this Bill, whether the Act of 1902 does provide in its local education authority anything which in the rural districts can be styled popular control. We have only to go into the rural districts in such counties as, for example, Oxfordshire or Lincolnshire, and there you will find that the managers of the local council schools formerly board schools are not elected managers, and have not been elected by any sort of local authority. The majority of them are nominated. I had always hoped that the Liberal Government when it came into power would make some resolute and effective effort to repeal what we then stated in opposition we meant to repeal, namely, those unjust provisions sweeping out of existence the school boards which were acknowledged to be unjust by nearly all the leading members of our Party in the discussions on the Act of 1902. Even if this Bill be passed we shall never have really effective local control in either country or town, until we fall back on the constitution of those school boards which were so ruthlessly swept away in 1902. If we cannot accomplish that, then we ought to provide some machinery which will give, more especially in the rural districts, some sort of elected education authority with a local knowledge and complexion who will really be the managers of the schools. So that even if the provisions of this Bill, after full discussion by all our educational and religious organisations—and no doubt they will be subject to the closest possible scrutiny—be accepted, I do not think we have yet seen the end of some determined efforts which will be made by those organisations to secure real popular control. The hon. Member for North West Ham suggested that certain denominations had been squared by the Minister for Education. All I can say is that the Wesleyan Methodist Church has certainly not been squared. No attempt has been made to square them, and if made, it would never have succeeded. They are not in the market, and I do not believe any other denomination is in the market in the sense in which I am now speaking. Have you got in the provisions of this Bill effective popular control? I will come to that point in a moment. Take, first of all, the case of the village. I think that the provision for securing for the villagers, whether Nonconformist or Church of England, adequate provision for religious instruction on five days of the week, by means of Cowper-Temple religious instruction, is, notwithstanding all the noble Lord and his friends may say, practically accepted by the common sense of the people of the country, as shown by the growth of the school board schools before the Act of 1902. In the village I think the provision is ample. Two days a week, or rather one day a week in addition to Sunday for the dogmatic, ecclesiastical, and special theological training, which is thought to be necessary beyond Bible teaching for these small children, seems to me abundant, and indeed, if you will go into the schools of Lincolnshire, in my division, you will find that while there is a small minority—in many of them only 20 per cent. of the children in those village schools are the children of parents who are members of the Church of England—those parents have been perfectly content to accept the teaching of the Church of England, for the simple reason that that instruction in many of those Lincolnshire village schools has been given by the teacher and is the simple Bible teaching to which the noble Lord so much objects. I pass away now from those village schools and come to a very serious part of the Bill, namely, the course to be pursued in places where there is more than one school. Out of 2,700,000 places in the 11,000 Anglican schools of this country, probably 500,000 would represent the children in the single school parishes. I doubt whether more than 500,000 or 600,000 represent the schools in the single school areas where Cowper-Temple instruction with the facilities mentioned is proposed to be given. So that practically you have in the 5,000 or 6,000 schools of the Anglican Church in the towns of this country, the overwhelming mass of the children now being instructed in those schools. I do not myself believe that those schools will be closed, and I greatly doubt whether many of them will be materially affected in their finances, because, with all respect to my right hon. friend in front of me, he and his friends will not always be on that bench. The day will come—that is one reason why we should strive to act now with scrupulous fairness—for reprisals. This 47s. we are now giving to the denominational schools, to the Anglican schools, and the Wesleyan and British schools if they accept it, may by a stroke of the pen, by my right hon. friend's successor, be turned into 67s., or even a larger sum, and where are we then? My hon. friends opposite will be in clover, but where we shall be I do not know. It is perfectly clear that such administrative action might be taken by the successor of my right hon. friend. Where is the popular control in the case of these 2,000,000 scholars and these 5,000 or 6,000 schools which are permitted under this Bill to contract out? We are told that the buildings are to be kept up, that the standard of efficiency is to be maintained, and that they are to be allowed to charge 9d. per scholar in fees. There the popular control ends, because the teachers will be strictly sectarian teachers. Is it supposed that any one of those teachers, or even an assistant or pupil teacher in those schools, when they are left in the undisturbed control of the Church of England, will be a Nonconformist. Would they think of putting a Nonconformist into such a position? [OPPOSITION cries of "Why not?".] I do not know why not, but I know that it is so already. Under the Bill of 1902 the head teacher cannot be a Nonconformist, and we know that in those schools, such posts, as well as all junior posts on the teaching staff, will be reserved for members of the Anglican Church. In that case what becomes of our profession that this Bill secures the absolute control of public authorities over all schools in the country, and that we are doing our level best to exempt all teachers from sectarian tests at present imposed upon them. Upon this point I am very much of the same opinion as the hon. Member for North West Ham, although I do not agree with him in his secular doubts and fears and prognostications. We are, I believe, a practical people, and I accept absolutely the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the working classes of this country, and, in fact, a vast majority of all classes, do not wish to and will not have Bible teaching excluded from the ordinary curriculum of the elementary schools. I go further, and say that the populace of our country is satisfied that the teaching should be given by the teacher of the school, whom we trust, and we do not want any minister of religion, the priest, or the Anglican clergy to add in school hours any further doctrinal teaching to that simple Bible instruction which the teacher at present is perfectly qualified and willing to give. On those two grounds I thoroughly approve of the provision made in the villages, which I think goes as far as any reasonable people require, and I believe it will be accepted by the village people, with the exception, probably, of the clergyman of the village and one or two of his friends. But I trust the Government will reconsider their Bill in regard to the town schools. Let me take, for example, the present grant of 47s. per head. That means a grant of £5,000,000 per annum to the Church of England. Take the Roman Catholics with 400,000 Church places in 1,100 schools. It means a grant of £940,000 or £950,000 per annum to the Roman Catholic Church for the education of their children subject to no popular control. And so I might go through the different religious denominations. I do not think it is sound policy, as the country is to provide these huge sums for educational work in the denominational schools, to be content with that small modicum of control which has been described in the Bill. We ought to secure some control in the appointment of teachers and their relief from those sectarian tests to which we so very strongly object. This Bill will doubtless be carefully considered by the great religious organisations and educational institutions of the country, and notably by the teachers. My hon. friend the Member for West Ham generously refrained from recalling the attention of the House to the extremely strong remarks made by the hon. Member for Camberwell in reference to this proposition two years ago. They have lost nothing of their strength by the lapse of time. I feel that the Bill in one of its main features does not meet the reasonable requirement of Nonconformists, and that it does not adequately fulfil, so far as the contracting out provisions are concerned, the two distinct pledges our leaders and our Party gave, namely, to insure popular control and to secure for teachers freedom from tests.

*MR. BUTCHER (Cambridge University): In the remarks I shall venture to address to the House I shall follow a line rather different from that of any of the hon. Gentlemen who have preceded me. I cannot candidly say that I feel any irreconcilable objection to the principle of the Bill. I remember, indeed, as other hon. Members do, certain speeches made in this House in 1906 by the educational advisers of the Government on the subject of "contracting out." The Member for North Camberwell at that time, speaking on an Amendment embodying the principle of "contracting out," said that it was—

> "The most vicious and reactionary proposal they were likely to hear of in the course of the debates. . . It was retrograde and pusillanimous to the last degree. . . They were asked back to the vicious principle of Parliamentary grants and voluntary subscriptions."

I do not subscribe entirely to that remark, but I do think that if applied under certain conditions the principle would be reactionary in the educational sense in the very highest degree. But what I am anxious to find out—quite honestly anxious, because as much as anyone I do desire to see an end to this unfortunate controversy—is whether the present Bill contains such objectionable features as would make anybody who cares for education reject it in the sense that the hon. Member for Camberwell rejected that Amendment. If I were of a cynical turn of mind I should probably say that the Government which in 1906 foresaw the ruinous effects of such a proposal on the education given in the Church schools are now consciously putting this scheme before the country as an attack upon the Church of England. Yet although we have good ground for doubt and mistrust in the previous conduct of the Education Department in its administrative orders, and although political ends rather than educational aims are there apparent, yet I cannot bring myself to believe that when the Government as a whole brings forward an Education Bill, knowing all that hinges on it through the country, they wish to offer us not a settlement, but a mockery.

I will examine the Bill so far as we know it from that point of view. What I should like to make sure of is this. I wish in the first place to know how the voluntary schools are affected on the financial side. Are the terms offered starvation terms? Does it mean that these schools are to drag out a poverty-stricken existence and finally die of inanition? And when I speak of the schools I am thinking not of the schools in the abstract, but of the children who in this and the next generation will be educated there. Are these children to receive a wholly inferior education to the other children of the country? Are the teachers to be worse paid? Are those who cling with earnestness to their distinctive religious beliefs to suffer as citizens on that account? If it is true what the Government spokesmen said in 1906, that a return to the condition of things before 1902 would involve all these results, then I should like to ask the Government, do they really believe that the addition of a 4s. or 6s. grant will avert that disaster? We shall hear much more about this afterwards, but at present I cannot conceive it possible that so small an addition to the grant will make the whole difference between a well-equipped school and one that is educationally retrograde. That, however, is a question of amount, and does not affect the principle of the Bill. I now turn from finance to take another point, I should like to be assured that the voluntary schools under this Bill will not be put outside the whole national system of education; that they will not be cut off from the main stream of educational progress and fall back into some educational backwater. What is in my mind is this: Will the children who go to these schools be able to make their way on to the secondary schools and higher grade schools? Will they be eligible for the scholarships given by the local authority? Will they receive the benefits of the new medical examination? I now gather from the Minister of Education that that is so; and if so I own it would relieve my mind of some very serious objections. If the children at these schools are not to be debarred access to civic privileges they would otherwise enjoy, I cannot raise an absolute objection on that score to the Bill. I pass to another point. Are the teachers in voluntary schools to be cut off from promotion? Are they to be tabooed and under a ban of exclusion so that they cannot pass on to other schools? Are they to be free to use pupil-teacher centres? If the teachers are placed on a lower professional level than all the other teachers in the country, that must bring down the schools to a similar level. I hope and trust that is not so. There are certain other conditions which might become so onerous that the schools could not maintain a healthy and normal existence; as, for instance, if the standard of equipment — fittings, structural fabric and so forth—were put impossibly high. I am all in favour of putting as high as you like the requirements for health, air, light, and decency. But I am certain that people think far too much of the material fabric and of costly externals as compared with the human instruments who work inside the schools. If you insist on an unreasonable standard in things external, you will so far lower the salaries of the teachers, and the quality of their teaching. I will make only a passing reference to another point, because it was fully dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition, namely, as to what constitutes an alternative school. The power of "contracting out" is to be given where there is a choice of schools. What does a choice of schools mean? Must there be a second school within 200 yards? Clearly that would reduce it to an absurdity. But there is one question which has not yet been touched, and that is how far this principle of "contracting out" will be applicable to new schools. May the denominations build new schools which will be recognised in the same way as existing schools? The Minister of Education seems again to assent to that, and I welcome that assent. Further I desire to know whether an existing single school area is to be stereotyped for all time.

MR. MCKENNA was understood to say that the single school parish would be stereotyped by the Bill.

*MR. BUTCHER: I gather it is to be stereotyped; and I regard it as a very important matter when we take into account the shiftings of population,—the increase in some places, and the decrease in others—the growth of a Church of England or of a Roman Catholic population and so on; and it seems to me in the highest degree unstatesmanlike to say that we must not provide for the case of rural areas becoming urban by the extension of towns into neighbouring districts. Why should the conditions of to-day be the standard for all time? Surely we need the power of adapting educational arrangements to new needs as they arise. Well, I have, so far spoken of urban areas and the power of "contractingout," and I am of opinion that the principle if worked libe rally along the lines suggested might prove to be not indeed an ideal solution, but a workable solution, the second or third best, which might continue for a considerable number of years. But when we come to the single school areas, the rural parishes, there is to be no "contracting out." Here in my opinion there is much graver objection to be taken to the proposals. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indeed mentioned two conditions attached to the transference of voluntary schools which in some degree mitigate the hardships of the plan. First he told us that the managers may make it a condition of transfer that there shall be Cowper-Temple teaching in the fullest sense that the Act of 1870 admits of. That is to say, that we may secure in these schools a Cowper-Temple teaching that can with reasonable certainty be called Christian teaching. To me, at least that makes a very great difference. I cannot speak of Cowper-Temple teaching with the contempt I have sometimes heard it spoken of. Cowper-Temple teaching is the vaguest of all phrases. It may mean anything from that historical or ethical teaching which alone some of the churches would admit, up to the highest teaching that can be given to children on such difficult questions as the cardinal truths of the Christian religion. Cowper-Temple teaching, though it could not be taken as a satisfactory basis for forming a Church, may be, and often is, a satisfactory basis for the teaching of children. That is a concession of some value. The other is that facilities are to be granted in the transferred schools in the country districts for teaching, every day in the week either before or after school hours, the distinctive doctrines of the Church, though that teaching may not be given by the ordinary school teacher. Of course, the proposal to oust the school teacher from this religious teaching, and also the proposal to place it outside school hours, is profoundly unsatisfactory. But I cannot say that I look upon the arrangement for single school areas as being beyond the hope of compromise. I would suggest by way of strengthening Cowper-Temple teaching and making it what it is intended to be, that provision should be made for the inspection of this teaching so ensuring its Christian character. Otherwise it is extremely likely to become a mere form. Now I do not intend to occupy any more of the time of the House, but only to say that I can see no reason why distinctively religious teaching should be forced to mean retrograde education, a lower level of school efficiency. Those who lay most stress upon religion as the basis of character, and therefore the basis of education, are not content to be put off with an inferior type of school. Strong religious convictions on the part of parents ought not to carry with it civic disabilities for the children. Training in religion ought to be compatible with a full training in citizenship. It is a cruel alternative to say to people, that they must either give up their religious principles or sacrifice the secular welfare and improvement of their children. Therefore, I hope that the Government may so modify the Bill as to remove these objections, which I think strike very deeply into the heart of the Bill, and make it a measure which can be accepted by the House and by the country.

SIR ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorganshire, E.): I congratulate my right hon. friend upon the introduction of a very important measure. It is certainly a bold attempt and very much in advance of anything yet presented to Parliament. I wish the right hon. Gentleman had been more satisfactory in regard to that part of his measure which referred to the country schools. But I confess I do not see how he could have done more than he has done. His proposal is very generous indeed. Those gentlemen who want the luxury of appointing their own teachers ought to be prepared to make some sacrifice if they wish to carry out their religious convictions and pay for it. I know that Nonconformists are prepared to make sacrifices and pay to carry out their wishes. If Churchmen do not do the same they are not worthy of the professions they make. What has been said with regard to the single school area will give great satisfaction down in the country. I have seen a good deal of proselytising. The Church thinks it is her duty to make as many converts as possible. I am very glad indeed to think that that grievance of Nonconformists will be removed. Personally, the Bill does not meet my convictions, but it is a good attempt to find some kind of solution. I trust that if it is carried out it will end the religious controversy which has been so inimical to religion than which there is nothing worse. It is an important measure and makes for something like a complete settlement.

MR. ACLAND (Yorkshire, Richmond): I think the attitude of those who disagree with us about this Bill is that they will say: "Why will you try to force another Education Bill through Parliament; why should you stir up religious strife, and throw the whole country into religious animosity in the hope that thereby peace will ultimately emerge?" It is said: "Why are you not content to leave things as they are? Things are fairly peaceful now and there is every chance of some educational arrangement coming to pass. Leave things alone, do not throw us into a turmoil again." The answer I would make to that criticism is, that things are not in a satisfactory position now. There is not in the position now anything of the kind. There is very little chance of educational progress.

There are many hon. Members who are anxious for a large number of reforms of the internal economy and efficiency of the school, methods of teaching, and looking after the children, but my hon. friends who are really concerned in education have no chance all. As long as things go on as they are, we shall continue for year after year to talk about this religious difficulty, and education will be left out in the cold. I think those of us who approved of the Bill of 1906, which was wrecked, are bound to try again in the direction of educational progress. I know that contracting out is not education. I think it is a pity that any school should receive less than any other school from public sources, for fear that by receiving less it may become less efficient than it otherwise would be; but when I hear hon. Gentlemen opposite and particularly the Leader of the Opposition, talk about our having adopted this system of contracting out I am nearly filled with despair. It seems to me that according to hon. Gentlemen opposite we can do nothing right, and that any course we adopt, whatever it may be, is certain to be wrong. Last year saw our failure in the House of Lords to make all schools come under some uniform system, but the right hon. Gentleman would not have that. Then we heard from him and his friends that the important thing in a school was the atmosphere. We heard about the splendid work that could be done, provided there was a religious atmosphere under private management, and a system of appointing teachers under this private management. We constantly heard how much could be done in schools conducted in that way, even if they did not get the same amount of grant, the same amount of public control and looking after, as there were in the case of the other schools. Now that we have been perhaps persuaded of this by means of the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman, now, when we say that any school that does not happen to be the only available, may do as it likes and preserve its atmosphere and will be given a very adequate grant, provided that those who wish to support it have any generosity, when we say in effect that this atmosphere on which so much stress was laid two years ago shall be preservable, then the right hon. Gentleman turns to the House and says the important thing is not atmosphere but public control. You must, he says, have all the schools under the same system. It therefore does not seem possible to arrive at anything which will please him, and in consequence his criticisms do not seem particularly helpful. Surely the guiding principle in considering this Bill—and I think perhaps the hon. Member for Louth need not be reminded of that—is to realise that we have tried this thing before, and that, whether it be our misfortune or our fault, we have failed to get the solution by which we tried to settle it before. We are bound now, if we want to have any chance of getting on with education, to try some other alternative and surely the only other alternative the hon. Gentleman can accept is that presented to us to-day. I do not think the danger to education of contracting out will be quite as great as is represented. It seems to be thought that every school which is allowed to contract out will do so, but the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill made it clear that these denominational schools which may contract out will have every inducement offered to them not to do so; they will be able to make their own terms; they will be able to ask for rent and facilities, and they may be allowed to ask for a good deal in return for coming into the educational system; and, I cannot help thinking that if this Bill passes and when things settle down, we shall find a very large number of denominational schools will come into the public system and under public control, receiving in exchange such advantages in the matter of rent and facilities as they agree to ask for and as it would be reasonable for us to give them. Another thing that the Leader of the Opposition said which really astounded me was that the Bill showed no desire whatever to meet the case of those parents who wished for denominational teaching to be given to their children. I think that is a statement worth looking into rather carefully, whether you take the single school areas or the urban school areas. If we take the single-school areas, what is it we are saying to the trustees of these denominational schools existing in them? In return for the bricks and mortar which they largely provided twenty or thirty or longer years ago, but which in many cases were partly provided out of State grants and not altogether out of subscriptions, we are going to offer to them, as long as there is a teachable population in that place, a room properly furnished, warmed, equipped, lighted and cleaned for their sole use on every Saturday and Sunday, from year's end to year's end, and on week days except between nine o'clock in the morning and half-past three in the afternoon. I think that is a most extravagantly generous offer. We shall not ask from these persons one single farthing, while we give them the use of the building for the remainder of the time, and as long as time continues we shall provide for that denomination a Sunday school, an evening school, and a school for their special teaching without its costing them one single penny out of their pockets. It seems to me, when that is really considered, to be most extraordinary that any man should say that we have shown no desire to meet fully the case of those who wish denominational teaching. Then we may consider the case of the urban area. That is different, but there again there seems to me to be a great deal of generosity. As I have said and as the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill said, there will be every desire to treat fairly the denominational schools which do transfer. They will be able to make their own arrangements with the authority as to facilities; and that being so, there will be plenty of public money coming to them, and opportunities given to them to maintain and to assist them in teaching the doctrines by which they set so much store. But to take the case of schools which prefer to remain outside the system and who contract out: what will their position be? Now, if I did not mishear what was said when the Bill was introduced, these schools will be receiving per child per annum a considerably larger grant than will be spent on the child in the provided school per annum. I will give the short facts which lead me to that conclusion. I think a figure was taken which was the total cost of education at present, to that was added £1,400,000 as a total of the new grant, that was divided by the number of children in average attendance and the result was 47s., and that is to be the sum to be paid to the contracted out school for the maintenance of the school alone. Now it struck me that this 47s. in the case of the provided school at present includes a considerable number of things which will not have to be included in the 47s. to be given to the children in the contracted out schools. I think so far as I can understand, for instance, that that 47s. would in the provided schools include a share of such things as the cost of attendance officers, even the administration of the schools by the central county office, and so on. If that be so, the cost, which is actually paid out of the taxes towards the education of children in provided schools must be considerably less than 47s., because it needs the administrative expenses and the cost of attendance officers to make up that 47s.; but in the non-provided schools they will have the 47s. to start with and they will not have to bear any share of the cost of attendance officers or administration.

MR. MASTERMAN was understood to ask the President of the Board of Education whether this was the case.

MR. MCKENNA: It is perfectly true that the voluntary schools will have less to spend their money on. They will not have to pay for the attendance officers, but they will have the same grant as on the average the local authorities receive.

MR. ACLAND: That is my point.

MR. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston): The rate assistance will not be taken into account at all.

MR. MCKENNA: Not at all.

MR. ACLAND: That is my point, but the right hon. Gentleman put it more clearly than I did. The voluntary schools will have less to pay out of their 47s. than the management of the provided schools. Therefore the money will go further in their case. That is a point which is worth considering, and I think it goes to show that there is no desire to despoil the schools of the money which is considered necessary to enable them to keep up to an efficient standard. The point was made that this Bill is designed as an attack upon the Church of England. I should be surprised if that charge made by the Leader of the Opposition had been repeated by his supporters, because it must be recognised that it is not an artificial rule but a natural rule that is now being made, that there must be an elementary school within the reach of every parent if the parent desires to have it for his child. It is an accident, an unfortunate accident for the Church perhaps, and not an act of deliberate malice, that the Church schools are in districts with regard to which we are obliged to make this arbitrary rule. We have no desire to cut out the Church schools, but we say there must be publicly controlled schools in reach of all the parents. That is the result of the necessities of the case. One must admit, although I think these schools, both in the towns and in the country will be found to be dealt with in a fair and generous way, that the offer made now is less good from the point of view of the Church than the offer which was made two years ago. It is the case of the Sibylline Books. We came two years ago offering a great many things. That offer was refused, and we are now offering something less. What we offered then was the cheque of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now we offer full facilities for denominational teaching. We say that the school shall be available after the ordinary school hours every day and on Saturday and Sunday, and that is considered sufficient to carry out the denominational side of the trust. I have one or two questions which I will venture to put to the right hon. Gentleman which he will cause to be answered to-night if he thinks proper. It is not quite clear to my mind whether matters have been so arranged in the Bill as to avoid controversy upon "may" and "shall." I was not sure from the right hon. Gentleman's speech whether local authorities are to be compelled, or permitted, to give these facilities. I do not know how far the right hon. Gentleman thinks he can go in requiring these facilities, to guarantee that Bible-teaching shall be given. If it is simply the case that the local authority "may" in exchange for the transfer of the school grant these things it is only fair that it should be strengthened in that respect. It is only fair that every school which is compelled to be transferred, as is the case in every single school area, should be guaranteed the continuation of the Cowper - Temple Clause.

MR. McKENNA: The word was "must."

MR. ACLAND: I am very glad to hear that answer from the right hon. Gentleman, and I am sure it will be considered by the vast majority of the people as very satisfactory. That is a thing that will be properly appreciated. Another question which will be familiar to the right hon. Gentleman is what will happen in the case of the non-trust schools in single school areas. I speak with some diffidence on this point, but I believe I am right in saying that of the present voluntary schools some 9,000 are under what the right hon. Gentleman calls tight trusts, namely, strictly educational trusts; but at the other end of the table there are some 2,700, which are definitely declared to be private schools, but which are not under any trust. May I assume that in the case of those schools the Bill will also require those to be transferred, and if so, may I conclude that it will be left to the private owners to make what arrangements they can, as to facilities, between themselves and the local authorities; because they will be in rather a stronger position. The managers are not compelled to keep on the schools, as is the case with the trust schools, and they will be able to say: "If you do not treat us properly we will close our schools, and you will have to build another." The local authority will not be able to say "We will build our school," because no money is provided for that purpose by this Bill, no provision is made for the building of schools in single-school areas. With regard to the general question of building new schools, I trust when we see the Bill we shall find that the cost is to be spread over the whole county and is not to be allowed to remain an almost intolerable burden on the particular parish in which a school is built. Another matter to which I wish to allude is the difficult question of endowments. That was not mentioned in the right hon. Gentleman's speech. I hope in this Bill it will be possible to avoid dealing with this vexed and complicated question. But there is one side of it that must give a good deal of hope to the supporters of voluntary schools. In many cases there are endowments for voluntary schools, and one of the first things which have to be provided for is the upkeep of the fabric. Clearly, if these schools are taken over, the money which is put aside for the proper upkeep of the fabric will not be needed for the purpose. All the repairs, external and internal, all the improvements or additions to the fabric, will be paid for out of public funds; and therefore the endowment money which has had to be accumulated for repairs of the fabric and for playgrounds, and so on, since 1902, should now be diverted to strictly denominational purposes instead of bricks and mortar. If the Board of Education deal with this matter in that way, as I think ought to be the case, a good deal more money will be available for denominational teaching. Then there is the case of definite religious instruction. In the Bill of 1906 all religious instruction was to be out of school hours. That question was hardly debated. I believe the opposite idea is the better. I believe that such religious instruction as is provided by the authority under the Cowper-Temple Clause should be compulsory and should be in school time, subject, of course, to a conscience clause. I do not know if the right hon. Gentleman can tell me how that will be.

Mr. McKENNA: There is no change in the existing law.

Mr. ACLAND: Then do I understand that what we call the Anson Bye-law is to be in force—and that children should be allowed to stay away altogether if it is understood that they are receiving religious instruction at some other place.

Mr. McKENNA: There is no change in the existing law. Whatever the existing law is it is still maintained.

Mr. ACLAND: That again is good news. My concluding remark is as to the secular system. People talk of the secular system as if it were a thing that required a great mass of fresh legislation. I have heard Members in this House speak of it as if local education authorities could not adopt a secular system without fresh legislation. Surely it cannot be too clearly understood that every local authority in this country can establish a secular school system in all its schools to-morrow by the vote of a mere majority of the council. But they do not do it. With some exceptions it is not considered a matter of importance, and it is not a question upon which the local authorities are elected. But the moment a majority of a local authority want it altered they can alter that system at once. Surely, therefore, the argument of those who urge that there is further necessity for reversing the present system cannot carry much weight. The people now have the power to do it if they wish, and surely we ought to trust them to make the alteration if they so desire or to keep the present system if they prefer to do so. I have great pleasure in giving my support to this Bill because I believe it is the only alternative left to us when the Bill of 1906 was destroyed.

Mr. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): When the right hon. Gentleman introduced this Bill this afternoon some of us thought he was going to bring forward a conciliatory measure, but very early in his speech it became apparent that the scheme he was bringing forward was much more drastic than that of two years ago. This scheme is much less favourable to the voluntary schools than the Bill of 1906. Perhaps I may be allowed to draw attention to the speech the right hon. Gentleman made last summer on 1st July, and reported in the *Western Mail*—

> "He would not tell them what his Bill would be, but it would be one which would make the Lords regret that they did not accept Mr. Birrell's measure. The Government went to the Lords with a peace offering in their hands, but the next time they went it would be with a sword."

The right hon. Gentleman compares the Bill of two years ago with this one as a peace offering compared with a sword. We thought the Bill two years ago was drastic enough, but this one is far more drastic and, in my opinion, practically means the extinction of the voluntary schools of this country. May I for one moment remind the House of the history of this question? Up to 1870 the children of this country were educated entirely by these voluntary schools, built up with private funds for the benefit of the children's religion and their secular education as well. The population of the country went on increasing to such an extent, owing to the increase of trade, that in 1870 the Government of the day had to bring forward a measure to provide extra accommodation for the education of the children, and also to make education compulsory; but what was their scheme? Their scheme was not to extinguish the voluntary schools, but to utilise and develop that system of voluntary education, and of only supplanting it where it was not sufficiently wide-spread. Even in the Act itself this is given as the reason. In Section 7 it says—

> "Where there is an insufficient amount of accommodation the deficiency shall be supplied."

And Mr. Forster said in his speech at the time—

> "There must be the utmost endeavour not to injure existing and efficient schools. Our object is to complete the voluntary system."

On the faith of these representations, one of them in the Statute itself, one of them from the words of the Minister who brought forward the Bill, the voluntary schools have increased from 1870 to 1906, from 8,281 to 14,294. Is it fair to bring forward a Bill, which, after those promises have been made, will practically close the doors of those schools? It is unfair both to the people who built those schools and subscribed to them, and to the parents who are sending their children to be educated in them. As I say, this Bill is more drastic than the one of two years ago. That Bill was one which still gave certain facilities for religious education. We thought them illusory, but still there they were. Another place amended that Bill with the object of making those facilities real and workable. What did the Government do? They did not even consider those Amendments, but took them *en bloc*, and sent them back to the other House. We thought we knew the reason for their action at the time. It was because that Bill did not really give satisfaction to any section of the people or of their own followers. But what does this Bill do in single school areas? It compulsorily takes the village schools without payment, without any payment of rent even. True, they say they will maintain them and keep them efficient, and they will give the trustees leave to have distinctive religious teaching on five days in the week when the school is open, but that lesson must not be given by the teachers and it must be out of school hours. We know what that means, and the right hon. Gentleman knows what it means. It means that it is a sham, and that there will be no distinctive religious teaching at all in those schools. Then he goes on to say that he will give them Saturday and Sunday. We all know what Saturday means. It is a holiday. Children will not go to school on Saturday, though on Sunday they have Sunday school. Therefore, as far as these single-school area schools go, it is practically taking them away from their present managers and owners, and the children who use them and their parents, and handing them over to the local authority without the payment of a penny. Now I come to the urban districts. The right hon. Gentleman says they may contract out and go back to the *status quo ante* 1902, but he volunteers to give them some extra provision from the Government grant, varying from 4s. to 6s. That is not adequate. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it means starvation. It means going back to that period before 1902 when these schools were struggling, and when their struggles were the reason why the right hon. Gentleman brought forward his Bill. That was the bottom of the Bill of 1902, to try to rescue these schools which were educating 3,500,000 out of the 5,000 000 children of the country, and to save them for education and religion. The right hon. Gentleman wants to go back to that time, to continue the starvation process, and to let these schools gradually go bankrupt one by one. I hope it is not his reason, but it is apparently his reason, and we beseech him to reconsider his decision before it is too late. Why cannot you leave things as they are? Where the Act of 1902 has had fair play and a fair chance, it has acted extremely well. It is acting extremely well in Sheffield. The right hon. Gentleman knows that Sheffield was one of the first cities to take up the machinery offered by the Act of 1902, and the result has been most beneficial. The education of the city has been co-ordinated in a marvellous way. We have now a very excellent high grammar school, a secondary school, and a training college for teachers, and the whole system has been co-ordinated by the co-operation of both political parties. Both parties in the city made up their minds that they would use the Act as far as possible for the benefit of education, leaving the religious question to take care of itself. That is the position. The Report of the Education Committee for 1906 stated that—

> "Cordial relations have been maintained between the Committee and the managers of the non-provided schools, and the result of hearty co-operation has been decidedly beneficial to the general interests of education. Various and somewhat difficult matters of administration had to be dealt with, but a spirit of conciliation has done much to smooth the way to a satisfactory settlement."

I am very thankful that that state of things exists, and I ask the right hon. Gentleman to allow it to go on; but I am afraid, if this Bill should pass into law, as I have not much fear that it will after what another place did with regard to a less drastic measure, that the result will be to disturb the satisfactory state of things which exist at the present time. When I ask what is the so-called Nonconformist grievance, the two reasons given by the right hon. Gentleman are that there must be full public control and no tests for teachers. May I for a moment test these two things? Under the Act of 1902 have not we full public control? The managers of the voluntary schools cannot spend a penny without the sanction of the local authority. They cannot fix what the teachers should receive as salary without the consent of the local authority. If they spend any extra money they have to provide it out of their own pockets. The only thing over which the local authority have not public control is the appointment of teachers. I quite admit that. But that is part of the machinery of the Act of 1902 in order to continue these schools as religious schools. The local authority has a veto on educational grounds, and that is perfectly right, but only on educational grounds. Our Leader, then Prime Minister, said that, if any other machinery could be suggested by which teachers could be provided competent to give the instruction of the religious persuasion for which the school was founded, he was quite ready and willing to accept it. But this was part of the machinery and was only made for that object. The other thing is that Nonconformists say that they are at the present moment subscribing money to pay for the teaching of religion in which they do not believe. Is that so? They have the whole of these voluntary schools provided for them at the present moment without paying a penny of rent or having to maintain the schools in efficient repair. The calculation is that the annual value which the State gets in that way is something like £750,000. The proportion of the teacher's salary which he receives for the small part of his time which he devotes to distinctive religious teaching does not come to anything like £750,000. I believe it is well under £200,000. If that is so, voluntary schools at the present moment are making a present to the State of over half a million a year. And under this Bill the right hon. Gentleman is to put upon the taxpayers of the country a burden of at least £1,400,000 in order to carry out the machinery. I cannot think the right hon. Gentleman expects this Bill to be passed. We are going to be occupied I am afraid, many days and perhaps many nights under the guillotine this session, but what one feels is that it is all sham and all for nothing, because we know, and the right, hon. Gentleman knows, that the Bill cannot become law. Our point is this, that under the present law of 1902, where that Act has had fair play, it has had in the city that I have mentioned, it has succeeded and is succeeding in carrying out the objects which the Government had in view.

*MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): There are in the Bill several points which command the approval of the House and of educationists throughout the country. So far as the Bill proposes to extend the area and degree of local public control over public elementary schools it is commendable, and so far as it frees schools from sectarian tests it deserves the approval of the House and the country as a whole. There is also a very considerable Exchequer grant. It is a great thing to find the Government proposing to spend from central sources and not from local rates, a sum of £1,400,000 at a time when owing to the unsatisfactory incidence of taxation the burden of local rates is very heavy indeed. No doubt this additional grant-in-aid will relieve that burden in places where relief is deserved. The additional grant-in-aid is not to exceed 75 per cent. of the expenditure upon the school, and that is a condition which will encourage a proper local expenditure. On all those points, in my opinion, the Bill will receive general approval throughout the land. In regard to the part of the Bill which deals with rural parochial areas in which there is only one school, I think the Bill sets up in those areas public elementary schools in the place of the denominational schools on very fair terms indeed. It allows in those schools either before or after school hours specific religious instruction which the parents of some of the children require, in return for the use of the building for five days a week as a public elementary school. It places also the use of the building at the disposal of the denomination for parochial purposes on the Saturday and the Sunday. That seems a very fair bargain, and my great regret is that the Government have not proposed to carry that system over the whole of the country. I cannot, however, give my support to that part of the Bill which deals with contracting out. I object to a proposal which makes it possible for several thousands of the schools to slip back, go back, be pushed back, into the condition of things which existed, educationally, before the operation of the Act of 1902. I know that my right hon. friend proposes to set up safeguards which he thinks will diminish this tendency, but he did not tell us the exact machinery whereby the wishes of the parents were to be ascertained on this question. The right hon. Gentleman said that one condition to be applied to a school being contracted out of this Bill by the trustees who own the school buildings was the assent of the majority of the parents of the children attending that school. I know that he proposes to use powers by means of codes and other regulations and by means of the inspectors of the Board of Education in order to secure that in those schools the level of efficiency and provision of educational means shall be as high as those which are to obtain elsewhere. But I would warn him that his safeguards ar bound to prove illusory. You cannot secure that the level of education established under the local authority by means of this Bill may not in a few years be set back to what it was before the year 1902. It is well known to everybody who has studied this question that there were two levels and two gauges of efficiency set up for schools before 1902 by the Board of Education. It is idle to suppose that the Board of Education inspectors going into certain voluntary schools and finding there an indifferent staff, too small in number, too poor in efficiency, with books, desks, maps, and stationery, all supplied upon the most parsimonious scale, will not adopt an attitude of charitableness and show some kind of mercy to that school, and thus the standard will be lowered. The result will be that the children attending the contracted out school will not receive the standard of education received by the children of the council schools in the same neighbourhood. What will the working classes of this country think of a system which will inevitably produce in those schools which are contracted out an inferior level of education for their children? There is a danger that in populous areas where the rates are high there will be a tendency to make a portion of the schools contracting out schools, and thus inefficient schools will still continue to form a proportion of the school accommodation of such areas. I do appeal to hon. Members of this House to pause before they approve of that bad part of this Bill which will permit and almost promote inefficiency in many schools. What effect will these proposals have on the progress of education? I appeal to hon. Gentlemen to consider carefully before the Second Reading of the Bill whether the state of things should be re-imposed which passed away in 1902—a state of things which exists in no other country in Europe, and so far as I know in the world. I hope the House will impress on my right hon. friend and the Government that some other method of dealing with this difficulty should be found, and of removing that black speck, that "rift in the lute" which will spoil the Bill and prevent what is intended to be a final settlement. I know that the Government are giving careful attention to the various methods of dealing with this matter; I know very well that the Government to which my right hon. friend belongs cannot without great reluctance have come to regard this as the only plan whereby the present problem can be solved. I doubt whether this will be a solution of the problem. The moment this passes into law you will have the old problem arising out of the claim for civil and religious liberty, and you will have the successors of the present ministry bringing in a Bill to increase the grant to denominational schools, and multiplying these schools. What has been done since 1902 has acted practically towards the creation of a national system of education in this country, and the bringing of all schools, more or less, under popular control. All that will be departed from and cast to the winds. In the interests of children, parents, teachers, and the nation as a whole, I hope the Government will reconsider this provision in an otherwise admirable Bill.

*Mr. CAVE: Like other speakers I have endeavoured to realise exactly what will be the effect of the Bill on the existing public schools, and I to approach the discussion of the proposals with a desire to think that the Bill is framed with no intention to bear hardly on any particular denomination. Taking it from that point of view, let me first deal with the single school areas. Now it is a fact that the great majority of the non-provided schools in these areas are Church schools, and I hope that Members of the House who are supporters of the Bill will consider how they would feel if they were in the position of those who support the Church schools. In the single school areas there will be for the voluntary schools no option at all. There is no contracting out, but there is practically no option. The right hon. Gentleman distinguishes between trust schools and other schools. Let me take, first, the other schools. I want to know exactly what is to become of them. Take the school belonging to the private owner. There are many such schools which are well carried on and are well found in every respect. These schools will in future be wholly outside the benefits of the Education Acts. There will be no grant made to them unless they are given up to the local authority. Unless the owners are prepared to find the whole of the expenses of the schools, without any assistance from the rates or taxes these schools must come to an end, and I suppose that a new school would be built at the cost of the locality. Unless, therefore, the owner consents to make over the school to the local authority at the cost of giving up what may be his religious convictions, it will be practically impossible for him to secure the continuance of the school. Take the trust schools which are not of the type referred to by the right hon. Gentleman. There it may be that the trustees will have no power to make over the schools to the local authority, and these schools which depend upon grants and rates must drop. In these districts a new school will be a necessity. In the case of the third class of schools, those held under 'tight' trusts, I understand that all these schools will drop, unless the trustees feel able to transfer the school without any consideration to the local education authority. The only compensation they get is what an hon. Member called a generous return. It is that for giving up the school on five days a week they are to be allowed to use it on the remaining two days, one being Sunday. I do not call that very generous compensation. It is only a limitation of a proceeding under which practically the whole of their property is taken away from them. This is in substance what happens. When a school is a denominational school it is blotted out, and all the years of effort and expense—which is a minor matter—given by the Church people in the locality to the conduct of their school go for nothing. The school passes out of their hands and becomes a purely undenominational school. That is the position in all these single school areas, and I think hon. Members will find that they are very much more numerous than they imagine. What is to become of the trust funds which have been set aside by the testator and others for the maintenance of these schools? Are these trust funds also to be taken over with the school and applied, not according to the trust, but to other purposes, or are they to be liberated? If they are, how are they to be dealt with in future? Will a scheme be made dealing with the funds, or will they be available to the trustees of the school for other purposes? So far I am dealing entirely with the single school areas, and I am bound to say that dealing with these alone, it seems to me extremely unfair treatment of the voluntary schools. No doubt hon. Members will remember what was said in 1870. It was said that the voluntary school owners were looked upon as the pioneers of national education in the country. It was said that the people owed a debt of gratitude to them for what they had done and Mr. Lowe said in effect that, so far from desiring to injure the voluntary schools, he desired to co-operate with them and give them every possible consideration. That is one branch of the Bill, and one which I think will receive careful consideration in the future. There is another point in relation to the teachers. A village school teacher is not to be allowed to teach in the Sunday school, although he may be the fittest man in the parish for the purpose, and the one whom the children know and have confidence in. [Cries of "No."] Is he to be allowed to teach on Saturday and Sunday?

Mr. McKENNA: He will please himself entirely on that point.

*Mr. CAVE: Then he may give the same teaching on Sunday, but not on an ordinary week-day?

Mr. McKENNA: I will reply to the hon. Gentleman later.

*Mr. CAVE: I only want to get it clear. Now let me deal with the other areas, and the effect there of the Bill on the existing schools. There, of course, there is an option. I am not sure whether

the option is given to the managers or to the parents in those cases. If to the parents of the children, will there be a vote or ballot on their part?

Mr. McKENNA: There will not be a vote by the parents. A parent is not bound to send his child to that school. Another public elementary school must be provided for him.

*Mr. CAVE: I was not the only one who was in doubt on that point. The hon. Member for Richmond asked the same question. Well, the managers have an option. But what an option it is! It comes to this, that either they may give up the whole of their efforts for educational purposes, and give up the school which they have carried on for years, and in which they have taken an interest, perhaps, throughout their lives, and that on terms which will prevent the religion which they profess being afterwards taught in the school, or they must contract out of the Act, and then see at what cost. I do not refer only to the money cost. Of course, the financial cost to these managers must be very great, because the only assistance they will get after contracting out is the sum of 47s. per child. I do not want to dwell much on this, but everyone familiar with the conduct of a school knows that that will leave a large amount to be found by the supporters of the school. The fees will not be sufficient. Let me point out that it is not fair to say that you are putting the managers back into the position they were in before 1902. Since 1902 the cost of education in all these schools has greatly increased. Salaries are higher and expenses are higher in every way, and the managers, if they contract out now, will have to find a very much larger sum than they would have had to find earlier. But that is only part of the question to be considered. What will be the educational cost to the children attending the schools? I think it will be very great. To begin with, the want of funds may prevent the managers from giving the children just the education they would like to give. Then, these schools will no longer be public elementary schools. The children attending the schools will not benefit from scholarships which, in many cases, are reserved for children attending public elementary schools. Therefore, unless there is some special provision in the Bill altering all these schemes the effect of it will be to deprive children of the chance of continuing their education if they are successful scholars. Then these schools will not have the support of the local education authority; they will probably not be schools in which continuation classes are carried on. Then how about medical inspection? Is that to be extended to the contracting out schools, and, if so, at whose cost? Will it be at the cost of the managers, or out of the public funds? That is a matter of great importance and must be taken into account at the present time. How about the teachers? Will the teachers be on the list of the local education authority so as to have a chance of promotion from school to school, and will they have the advantage of any pension schemes? Will their position in all respects be really the same as that of teachers in the provided schools? If these questions are answered against the contracted-out schools the effect will be either that they must be given up or else carried on under conditions grossly unfair both to scholars and teachers, and you will put the managers to the detestable choice of either causing injury to the children under their care or giving up the schools of which they are so fond. If the result is as I have indicated, I do not think that the voluntary school managers will be fairly treated. There is one other matter. The subscribers to the contracted-out schools will be in the position of paying twice over; they will pay the subscriptions to their own schools and pay the rates for the support of the other schools. For all these reasons, I think that the proposals in the Bill are very unfair and that the result will be very injurious to the cause of education. As to the cost to the public, to begin with, there is to be £1,400,000 of additional grant; but apart from that the cost will be very great. In many cases it will be found that the alternative of contracting-out will be taken. In most of these cases new schools will have to be built, and the cost of so doing will be very heavy, involving a large addition to the rates. I know that in regard to single-school areas the schools will be taken over at the cost of the owners and not of the public; but in other cases new schools will have to be built, and a very considerable burden will be thrown on the rates. No provision is made for that, so far as I understand, in the Bill. I do not want to pronounce a final judgment on the Bill, because we have not yet seen its provisions or had them fully explained to us. But, if I understand the Bill rightly, I think it will be grossly unfair to those interested in voluntary schools and will be deeply resented by them, and I do not think that the country will approve or sanction such a Bill.

*MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton): I desire to express my very sincere regret at the tone and temper of the speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, and to express my personal denial of the accusation of the right hon. Gentleman that this Bill is aimed at the Church of England. I speak as a sincere admirer of that Church, which I regard as always potentially and often actually the greatest influence for good in this country. I submit that to be identified with a speech such as that just delivered by the right hon. Gentleman injures the Established Church far more than anything its enemies could say or do. It is almost impossible to put up with such accusations without being tempted to make counter accusations which have more foundation in fact than any he has brought forward. When I read in the Conservative newspapers this morning that protest meetings against this Bill had been already arranged, it became obvious to me that, before knowing anything of its provisions, the Conservative leaders were perfectly determined on their opposition to it. I warmly support the Bill chiefly because it is calculated to prevent what is called the "secular solution," which I for one find abhorrent. There is growing up, not only in the Party to which I belong, but in the Party opposite, a desire for secularism, in the belief that it affords the only tolerable relief from the quarrel between sect and sect. It seems to me that in the face of such a situation those who desire to retain some form of religious teaching in the schools ought to make a desperate effort to end the controversy which has raged ever since the compromise of 1870, and see whether this Bill does not contain a better chance of a compromise which will be successful than any contained in any measure yet proposed to Parliament. At any rate, the compromise is so satisfactory that the Leader of the Opposition has not found any imitator in his denunciations in any subsequent speaker in the debate. The hon. Member for Marylebone talks of Cowper-Temple teaching as a residuum of Christianity. [AN HON. MEMBER: That is a quotation.] You can make almost anything sound objectionable by giving it an objectionable name. One is familiar with specimens in museums covered with labels with long grotesque Latin names, which conceal the beauty of the objects themselves and make them unseemly, if not hideous. That is the typical position of Cowper-Templeism. Little children are, after all, of too tender years to appreciate the differences between sects and creeds, and if we regard Cowper-Temple teaching as the maximum which all sects can combine, subject to a conscience clause, to teach through the agency of the State, it seems to me that all the objections raised to it by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone disappear. However, I rose to speak of the single school areas which I know most about, and to consider how this Bill will affect the non-provided schools after it becomes law. What are the objects and desires of those who wish the continuance of and those who founded the voluntary schools with tight trusts? Their object and desire is that denominational teaching shall be continued and that secular teaching shall be carried on as well. The State is under the Bill to carry out the secular part of the trust, and the trustees will be able to provide at their own expense and with their endowments in buildings maintained and equipped by the State the sectarian part of the trusts. We deny the existence of the new-found right of the parent to have his children taught at the expense of the State the tenets of his particular denomination. But we do not deny for the parent the right, at his own expense, to provide the teaching for his children which he desires.

It is said that Cowper-Temple education is objected to by many people in the country; but there is a conscience clause attached to it. Those who do not approve of Cowper-Temple teaching do not conscientiously object to helping to pay for it, and they cannot understand the Free Church objection to being asked to pay for denominational education of which they do not approve. You may say that you have an objection to pay rates for other people's religious teaching, when they object to pay rates for yours, but that, after all, is not a conscientious objection it is only what may be termed an imperfect bargain. It is objected that the facilities in these single school areas are not sufficient. But the facilities are not limited to two days a week but are afforded on seven days a week, and the building for Sunday school is to be kept in repair, warmed and lighted. Then it is objected that the facilities are given out of school hours. What does that mean? It simply means that the State is not to be liable to provide machinery for bringing children to denominational teaching and this will enhance the dignity of the religious teaching. Take the case in which the teacher is a clergyman of the Church of England. I am quite sure that it will not be difficult to bring those children whose parents consent to receive denominational teaching from the appointed teacher of the sect which desires the religious teaching itself. Then we are told that the very fact that the teachers are prevented from giving this teaching will put it upon a lower level than other teaching; but it would seem to me that the distinction which is made will put it upon a higher level because it will rest on voluntary effort, and compulsory efforts are of very little use in religious matters. Of course the trustees will lose the management of such denominational schools, but it seems to me that when the Act of 1902 was passed, this claim to manage their own schools disappeared for ever, and under that Act they have to reconcile themselves to the fact that a compromise is suggested to them which will enable them to carry out the intention of the denominational school with public managers so far as secular subjects are concerned. The hon. Member for Leicester has advocated once again, as he so often has in this House, the so-called secular solution and has told us that this single-school area proposal is, in fact, the secular solution. I do not think it has been denied that every parent has the right to the secular solution for his own child or that the local authority has the right to it within its sphere of influence. What we object to is the secular solution so far as the State is concerned. What I hope we shall never see in this country is the State saying: Although it is possible to teach everything, else, owing to differences of sect it is impossible to teach that which is the best worth teaching of anything, namely, religious teaching which is all too often the only religious teaching which the child gets at all. The hon. Member for Leicester could not see the difference between rate aid and tax aid. When you add rate aid to tax aid you have the whole public cost of the school and when you subtract rate aid from tax aid, denominational instruction has to be paid for by private subscription. For all schools it seems to me this Bill is providing some kind of public control; when rate aid is obtained it is providing the control of the people who pay the rates through the county council. When tax aid alone is afforded the control which is to be given is that of the Board of Education, responsible to the public through this House of Parliament. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone objected that anyone might be called upon to give Cowper-Temple teaching as no questions were to be asked before the appointment of a teacher as to what his creed was, and therefore you might find some one giving Cowper-Temple teaching who did not believe in it. As I understand the Bill, no teacher will be called upon to give Cowper-Temple teaching against his will, and if the local authority desires to give that teaching it is perfectly at liberty to engage for that purpose one educated to give it. [Cries of "Tests."] As I understand it there is to be no test for the teacher who gives secular teaching in the school. As I understand the Bill, and I hope my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education will correct me if I am wrong, no teacher is to be compelled to give Cowper-Temple teaching. It is perfectly possible, when a local authority signs an agreement with a teacher who does not wish to give Cowper-Temple teaching, for them to engage one who can. I do not think hon. Members appreciate the difference between a test which is to be a condition of the employment of a teacher to give secular education and that of a man specially entrusted with the responsible task of giving religious teaching to children. I want to say a word as to contracting out. It does seem to me that too much has been made of the possibility of the educational inefficiency which is produced by this contracting out. Under this Bill there will be always in reach of the children who go to such a school an alternative public elementary school, and the very fact of the existence of this will necessitate the keeping of the voluntary school efficient, or else the parents would remove their children. And, even if we do risk a certain amount of educational inefficiency, it seems to me that very possibly the difference of religious beliefs in this country may prevent a perfect educational system, and that certain sacrifices of educational efficiency may perhaps have to be made in recognition of the conscientious beliefs of the people of this country. I am perfectly certain of this, that ever since the Act of 1902, and even before it, attempts to over-ride conscientious opinions have delayed and retarded educational efficiency, and that you can never obtain such efficiency at the cost of sectarian strife, but only by general co-operation.

*MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): Having listened to this debate with very great attention, and having no desire to use language other than the most conciliatory towards the Government's present proposals, I can only hazard the conjecture, speaking as far as the North of England is concerned, that this Bill is not seriously intended to pass into law. Nor do I think an analysis of the beliefs of members of the Government—I do not mean their religious beliefs, but of the educational theories of the present Government—could have led to the expectation that they would be likely to produce a Bill which would pass into law, either on the lines of the present Bill or the last Bill. We know that the Secretary of State for War, because he has repeatedly told us so was always a convinced believer in the 1902 Bill passed by my right hon. friend. He has said so repeatedly, and called attention to the immense work done for the cause of national education by that Bill. We know the Home Secretary is in favour of a secular solution. We know the late Minister for Education was in favour of parents' rights, and that the Prime Minister is sometimes in favour of parents' rights and sometimes not. We know that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board is at one time in favour of contracting out, and at another time not. In those circumstances it is not very surprising that the Bill which has at last been produced should have been met from all quarters of the House with a chorous of disapproval except from the hon. Gentleman who has just resumed his seat. When we are asked to place these educational debates upon a higher level, when we are asked whether we cannot forget the sectarian differences, to think a little more of the interests of the children and a little less of those miserable differences, surely we are entitled, those of us who believe that there is one line and one line only upon which true educational progress can be made to point out that after the 1902 Act was passed—which by the universal admission of every one who has spoken from that side of the House did a great work for education in this country—that was the time when hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite thought fit to excite a Welsh revolt in order that they might show us how desirous they were that progress should be made. What is the nature of the proposal? The circumstance which I think will attract the widest attention in Lancashire is that this Bill is totally distinct from the Bill introduced eighteen months ago. Eighteen months ago we were told that the House of Lords had flouted the will of the people as expressed by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. What was the will of the people eighteen months ago as construed by the then Member for Education? The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "There will be no contracting out of popular control and all that popular control means."

And he continued—

> "No elementary school shall receive a penny of public money either from the rates or taxes unless it becomes a provided school."

When hon. Gentlemen get up like the last speaker and enthusiastically support the proposals of the Government to-day, which are the very negation of the extracts I have just read, we may well ask is there anything in the way of inconsistency which hon. Gentlemen opposite are not prepared to swallow? That was the first Bill. The session afterwards an attempt was made to diagnose the will of the people by the introduction of that squalid piece of meanness, the Passive Resisters Relief Bill, and one which had the happy effect of imposing a one-fifteenth educational rate on denominationalists, a totally different Bill from the first Bill, totally different in its details and in its expression of the will of the people. What happened? The second Bill was dropped after a short Parliamentary career, and it was dropped, I deliberately say it, for one reason only, that it would not admit of being jockeyed in the interests of the Roman Catholic community. ["Hear, hear".] I am not impressed by those cheers, because I recollect in my short Parliamentary career the first Bill, which hon. Gentlemen opposite say was rejected by the House of Lords, the second Passive Resisters Bill, and now this Bill, and all three there was not one which hon. Gentlemen did not receive with the same indiscriminate and unquestioning enthusiasm. What is involved in that statement of the Minister for Education that he was going to the Church of England with a sword in his hand, as compared with the peace offering of the previous Minister? I do not question the right of the right hon. Gentleman to go to any community with a sword in his hand, if he proposed to do so.

Mr. ACLAND: The House of Lords, not the Church of England.

Mr. F. E. SMITH: Oh, he is going to the House of Lords with a sword in his hand. Up to the present there has been a singular and inexplicable delay in producing the sword from its scabbard. It is to be the House of Lords, but because the House of Lords threw out a Bill which no longer represents the will of the people—because it cannot be contended that this is the same Bill—we are driven to the conclusion that the present Bill, more drastic than the last, is going to be imposed upon the House of Lords without reference to the merit or demerits of denominationalism, but simply as a piece of petulant spite against the House of Lords. Is it or is it not the will of the people that there should be two systems of State schools, or only one? That is the first point upon which the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board has to express his views, if he is going to intervene in this debate as he has done in previous debates on this question. If it is the will of the people that there should be two, why did the late Education Minister scrupulously and with some care arrange for one? If it is the will of the people that there should be one, why is the present Minister arranging with the same scrupulousness and care that there shall be two? Then, how has the change in the will of the people been discovered? Was it by some kind of intuitive divination, or was it by some kind of private information from the people of Devon, Hereford, or Worcester, that the Government have discovered this change? And when we are dealing with the question of the application of these money grants, which are still to preserve denominational schools, I hope the House will not have failed to observe the right hon. Gentleman's remark when he told the House that the pecuniary arrangements that are now being sanctioned must not be assumed to have a permanent character, that they might be altered in one year, or in two years. That is nice information for the people of Lancashire, who in past years have made great sacrifices for their voluntary schools. We know what we have to expect from the right hon. Gentleman. We know that he deals with all problems of a perplexing character in a method which has the attraction of simplicity. The right hon. Gentleman appeals from his embarrassed political side to his corrupt judicial side—[Cries of "Withdraw."]—his partial judicial side. [Renewed MINISTERIAL cries of "Withdraw."] I withdraw nothing.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member has no right to make a charge of corruption against another hon. Member.

*MR. F. E. SMITH: I at once, and in respectful obedience to your ruling, Sir, substitute for the charge of corruption the charge of partiality. [Cries of "Withdraw."] If I am out of order I shall be told so from the Chair, not from below the gangway. I repeat, an appeal from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde is not one which gives any great encouragement to those who are told that the last chance you have is with administrative arrangements that are going to be made in the future. Let me ask what is this scheme of contracting out? It is this, and I speak in the presence of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board when I say, just as he said that Clause 1. was the spinal cord of the last Bill, so contracting out is the spinal cord of this Bill. Is there one Member of the Government who ever appealed to his constituents on the ground that they were going to settle the question on the principle of contracting out, or an hon. Member opposite who ever said so to his constituents? I recall the words of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, who, in 1906, in describing "contracting out," said it was "an exception grafted on an exception," and that he was "amazed that this proposition for contracting out should come from a Liberal Government." It cut across, he said, the spinal column of the Bill; the voluntary schools could not stand the strain in 1902, after being four years on the rates, and the expenses of maintenance would have increased by 20 per cent., while the teachers would be paid on the School Board standard. "The children of the country," the hon. Member for North Camberwell said, "would be once more sacrificed, and he viewed the whole proposition with the greatest apprehension and with something approaching disgust; the proposal to allow contracting out was thoroughly reactionary, and he regretted that it should have come from the Liberal Government. I can only say, that a gentleman who is capable of such intellectual acrobatics in the short period of eighteen months deserves something better than an under-secretaryship. He ought to be a law officer. Let us consider for a moment whether the hon. Gentleman was not abundantly justified in the statements he made in 1906. I offer for the consideration of the House some figures that have been supplied to me. The voluntary schools prior to 1902 cost £2 6s. per child, and the grant amounted to £1 15s., a deficiency of 11s., which caused the intolerable strain that was admitted to be utterly irreconcilable with any school efficiency. ["No, no."] Hon. Members say no, but the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, who knows a good deal more about it, says yes. I prefer to take the views of the hon. Gentleman on this matter. Now the expenditure in all schools, including voluntary schools, amounts to £3 2s., and the new grant is announced as £2 7s. That is an increase of 16s. as compared with the cost of the voluntary schools prior to 1902, and an increase of 12s. at most in the grants. What is likely to be the effect of this greater deficiency? It is not pretended that contracting out is in the interests of educational efficiency. It is introduced to get rid of political difficulties. Its first object is to shift the direct incidence of denominational charges from the rates to the taxes, and the second is to lessen the amount which is payable on adjustment to the denominations. Those are the two objects, and I hope we shall hear something of them in this debate. I should like to hear the view of an intelligent foreigner when he was told that in the year 1908 it was proposed to divert the educational charges from the rates to the taxes, and when he asked for an explanation he was told that the answer was neither administrative, political or educational, but that it was merely to relieve a certain type of conscience. Let the House for a moment pause to consider this ever fresh phenomenon of a conscience which can pay a tax but cannot pay a rate. There is some distinction, if anyone is so fortunate as to understand it; but, having considered it carefully, I confess I have entirely failed to do so. Does it really exist? Is there really in this House a conscience which, when it pays for the denominational education of others, recognises the distinction between a rate and a tax? Is there, away from the public platform and the country, any conscience which feels the conscientious objection to pay a rate for the denominational teaching of other people's children? I do not believe anyone will seriously come forward and say their conscience feels the obligation to pay a rate for the denominational teaching of other people. If there is, will the same person dare to come forward and say that, although he feels this monstrous and intolerant affront to his conscience when asked to pay out of rates for denominational teaching, he does not feel the same affront when the charge is made in taxes? If, indeed, the affront is not felt when the charge takes the form of a tax, how is it that the most simple solution of all has inexplicably escaped the attention of one Government and one Party after another? If that distinction is valid and the Noncomformist conscience can pay taxes and not rates, why not adopt the simple solution and impose the whole educational charges upon the taxes? You can then give the denominationalists all they want and this conscience is at last assuaged without any difficulty. The real truth is that this distinction on which so much stress is laid is not a distinction which has ever been put forward by a leading Member of the Liberal Government. The Secretary of State for War saw with the most complete clearness how hypocritical it was to seek to establish such a difference. The difficulty in which the Government is placed is that they are face to face with the results of an entirely impossible electioneering campaign, an electioneering campaign which has led to one impossible Education Bill after another. It was short, simple, and intelligible, and can be represented in a sentence. The election campaign was "Not one penny of public money without public control." Well, if you are strong enough to do that, you are in the road which leads equally to logic and success; and, if you are not strong enough to do that—and I do not think there is a single member of the Government who will contend that you are strong enough —to attempt to establish any distinction between rate and tax is absolutely inconceivable. I said that the second object in contracting out was to lessen the amount given in future to denominations. On the net result they are to receive less. I say that from the first stage of this Bill to the last I shall oppose it, and I believe Lancashire, as a whole, will oppose it. I believe Lancashire Members, wherever they sit, will be driven by the views of their constituencies to oppose the Bill before this debate closes as many of them did the last Bill. I shall oppose it on the broad and simple ground that no Bill can ever succeed in this country which does not treat Nonconformist, Anglican, Jew, and Catholic alike. That is the principle I hope all who oppose this Bill will adopt. No denominationalists ought to be asked to cut their children adrift from public funds to which they are contributors. If it is possible to treat all alike, obviously that is the fair and right solution. How is it possible? There are two ways, and two ways only. The first is the secular solution. Of all the weapons and of all the devices to which this Government when they are in difficulty make resort, the most contemptible and most unconvincing is when, faced with denominational arguments, they say: "If you press it, you will drive us to the secular solution." Let me say that if the Government are to be driven to the secular solution by the arguments I and my hon. friends use, the moment they come into the open and go to the country on the secular solution the better pleased we shall be. The only Party of any strength in this House which has pronounced itself by its leading Members to be strongly in favour of the secular solution is the Labour Party. But I have noticed, not without interest, that, although many of their Members speak with great force and with great eloquence in this House in favour of the secular solution, when an opportunity is given to them of challenging the opinions of the constituencies in three-cornered and other fights, the candidates whom the Labour Party select do not show the same zeal and enthusiasm in the cause of secularism which their leaders show in this House. Quite recently we had an election in the Kirkdale division of Liverpool. It was an election between a Labour and Socialist candidate and a Conservative candidate. I should have thought in my simplicity that that was an admirable opportunity in a great and industrial centre of population for the Labour Party to nail their colours to the mast, to advance the great and popular cause of secularism and submit it to the suffrages of a democratic constituency. Before the Labour candidate had been in the constituency four days, however, he was strongly in favour of Cowper-Temple teaching, and I have no doubt, if we had kept him there a month, he would have been strongly in favour of denominational teaching. I think I am correct in saying that the same experience happened in Hull; and I also think that in the recent contest at Leeds, when a Labour candidate wished to be returned to the House of Commons, he did not nail to the mast this secularist doctrine which we are told is such a serious menace to us if we press our claim. The only comment I make is that the advocacy of the secular doctrine in this House is likely to be little persuasive when it is combined by the Party which, as a Party, is the only Party in favour of it, with a shrinking disinclination to challenge the opinion of the country when opportunity is given them to do so. I say deliberately that the Labour Party can no more carry their Roman Catholic operatives with them in their battle for purely secular education than they can carry far wilder and more extreme industrial proposals. Is there one Labour representative of Lancashire who can say that the Roman Catholic members of the trade unions are going to follow them in their secularist campaign? The Member for East Leeds put down at the recent trade union meeting a resolution in favour of denominational education. It was a resolution which I would have accepted myself. It was in favour of the parental right in the most extreme form. The hon. Gentleman was induced to withdraw it, I do not know by what agency or with what object. But so far as Lancashire is concerned I do not believe any Labour Member sitting for a Lancashire constituency—and I ask the House to take this as the criterion of the secular prospect—will come forward and say that he is in favour of the secular solution.

A LABOUR MEMBER: We have voted for it in this House.

*MR. F. E. SMITH: I quite agree. The whole of the supporters of the Government have voted for two different Education Bills in this House. The question is: What is the hon. Gentleman going to vote for in the country, and what are the country going to vote for when they get an opportunity? If the principle of secularism for this reason fails, we are thrown back upon the principle of parental right, which has received a great deal of allegiance in all parts of this House. I understand from the present Minister of Education that he, too, to some extent is in favour of the principle of parental right; but I noticed with surprise that, when speaking in the country the other night, he described it as an "empirical fad." Why the right hon. Gentleman should be in favour of an empirical fad he did not explain. I would like to call attention to the fact that this remedy has been advocated by very large sections of the House. The distinguished brother of the Member for East Marylebone moved an Amendment to the Bill of 1902, which, I believe, would have had the effect of establishing a parents committee. I profoundly regret that that Amendment was not adopted by my right hon. friend who had that Bill in conduct. It was a proposal which, I believe, was supported by the hon. Member for East Mayo.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I moved the Amendment.

*MR. F. E. SMITH: I beg the hon. Member's pardon. It was moved by the hon. Member for East Mayo and, I think, supported by the noble Lord who sat for Greenwich. That, of course, was an Amendment which would have had the effect, if not precisely in the way which would probably be adopted to-day, of establishing the principle of parental right. I regret profoundly that the House did not adopt that. Not only was the hon. Member who sat for Greenwich in favour of that view, but the present Prime Minister also expressed himself strongly in favour of it—

"We believe the child should be brought up in the faith of its father until it is old enough to choose for itself."

That is not only the child of the Nonconformist, but equally the child of the Roman Catholic or Anglican father. The late Minister for Education, until he assumed the responsibilities of office, spoke more directly and clearly, though in very homely language. He said—

"Here the parents really must conquer their shyness and make their choice apparent in this heated controversy and tell us, when they send Tom and Jane to school, if and what religious instruction they desire them to receive. We are not an imaginative people. Jews, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Dissenters in a lump will usually exhaust the list. The great body of Dissenters will be found ready to accept the broad, simple Bible teaching which characterises Board School Christianity."

And this was the way the right hon. Gentleman got the mandate from the country. He got it by saying to the Catholics below the Gangway that his view was that the only permanent solution was by giving to the parent of every child the right to determine what the religious education of that child should be in the public elementary schools of the country. Then we had the same statement by the Attorney-General for Ireland at Liverpool, and we have had with limitations the same statement made by the hon. Member for the Abercrombie Division, and the hon. Member for East Toxteth. Each and all of these have committed themselves to the principle of the parents' right. This principle is not one which can be determined in reference to any vulgar fraction or to any arrangement or calculation as to the number of parents. The Government have produced a Bill which they and the House know will never become law in its present form. Then consider for a moment the odious position in which they have put the political Dissenter in the eyes of the country. They have represented the Dissenter as being a parasite upon the scanty pence of the Anglican and the Catholic operatives. You represent the Dissenter as saying: "We will have the religious education that we desire, and that is sufficient for us. You shall pay for it, and if you want to have the religious education which is sufficient for you, you shall pay for ours, and also pay the additional charge." The answer is: "It is not meanness which makes us take up this position. It is conscience." Fortunate indeed are those whose consciences providentially coincide with the economy of their pockets and the exploitation of their neighbours. The only observation that those of us in the North of England, in Liverpool and Manchester, where, at any rate, we are not enthralled with this doctrine, have to make if this provocative and brutal policy is to be pressed to its conclusion is that history will teach, as it has taught, that, from the days of Praise God Barebones to the heroes of the Welsh revolt, there has never been a Parliament dominated by political Dissent of which England has not grown more and more sick.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): I may perhaps be permitted to say a word or two on this very familiar topic. If I do not follow the hon. and learned Member at once it is because I want to come to education and the Education Bill of my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education. I will at once thank my hon. and learned friend for forecasting me some day to the office of Law Officer of the Crown. I hope he may live to see it. The first broad charge which is always made against us in dealing with the denominational system is that in our proposals we are guilty of something in the nature of breach of faith towards those who left the money to build those schools. That view is taken again tonight. I should like to examine that proposition quite shortly. I wonder whether hon. Members opposite quite realise the conditions under which the people built these denominational voluntary schools and the conditions under which the State undertook to give daily maintenance to them. From the very beginning it was the genius of the whole educational system and fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago both Tory and Liberal Governments laid it down that denominational schools might be built and the State would give maintenance, but the maintenance would take this form, that for every penny that the State gave a penny must be found locally out of private pockets. That has been the genius of the whole system. I will go no earlier than 1868. The Royal Commission over which the Duke of Newcastle presided found at that time that the cost of a child's education was 30s. a year, and recommended that the average grant payable should be about 10s. a child, never exceeding 15s., and under their recommendation Article 47 of the Education Code of 1861, arranged the grant in this way, that it was to be reduced by its excess above the amount of school fees and subscriptions or the rate of 15s. per scholar in average attendance, and the Act of 1870 carried on that general principle. It says to the denominationalists, "Build a school by all means; we will give you a Government grant, but for every penny we give you, you will find a penny yourself." The Act of 1870 carried that out and laid it down in Section 97, dealing with grants that—

> "Such grant shall not for any year exceed the income of the school for that year which was derived from voluntary contributions and school fees and from any source other than the Parliamentary Grant."

That principle has been steadily departed from by the Party opposite. In 1876, it was departed from by a Tory Government to this extent, that up to 17s. 6d. grant per child there need be no local contribution at all. Beyond that Government grant, penny by penny they must raise the same amount locally. And throughout all the years special aid grants have been given. The Government grant has increased so that that principle has been entirely violated. The supporters of the voluntary schools have cheerfully acquiesced in the abrogation of the principle under which those schools were built. It seems to me they gladly violate the spirit of their obligation when it comes to a question of more money. But they stick out in the closest possible way for the very letter of the trust deed when it comes to the concomitant of popular control. That is partly why this Bill is necessary. Now down to

1870 the elementary education of this country was entirely under the denominational voluntary system. The schools under private management gave denominational teaching as part of their provision, teachers were appointed subject to religious tests. They got Government grants, but they were compelled to make up their supplemental income from voluntary contributions. But the country found out long before 1870 that that system could not adequately cover the ground, and there were a great many endeavours made, not successful of course, till Mr. Forster's endeavour of 1870 to remedy the state of affairs. His Act said to this system which had held the ground by itself up to that time, The denominational system will go on. You will give denominational teaching. You will be under private management. You will test your teachers. You will have Government grants and you will make up your income from private sources! Denominationalists have flourished amazingly under the Act of 1870. They have added to their operations by 100 per cent. They found long before 1870 that the denominational system could not cover the ground and so in the Act of 1870 they created or gave the locality the right to create a local authority directly elected for educational purposes charged with this function, to survey their area and say whether there were educational deficiencies. These were to be supplied by a new type of school — the Board school. That school, too, was to get Government grants like the old system, which was to continue. It was to be under public management. It was not to give denominational teaching. Its teachers were to be appointed without reference to their religious beliefs. And in consideration of these facts it was not to make up its local income from private voluntary sources. It was to come upon the rates. But by almost common agreement it was resolved in 1870 that if the school came on the rates, precedent to that it must agree to be publicly controlled and not to give denominational teaching. These two systems went on. The denominational system flourished, as I say, amazingly. The new system grew up under these new conditions and of course, with the spread of the new system and the growing universality of the School Board rate and the increase of the rate in many localities there was what the Leader of the Opposition called an intolerable strain upon the supporters of the denominational system. He tried to meet it in 1897 with a special aid-grant, which was, of course, merely a matter of postponing the funeral so far as a great many schools were concerned. When we came to 1902 I should say about half the schools were *in extremis*, and he had either to let them go under or deliberately put them upon the slippery slope of the rates. He put them on the rates quite deliberately. I have never complained of that. I do not complain of these schools being on the rates. I am tired of the public education of the working man's child being a matter of private charity. That is a dangerous anachronism which this country cannot afford to continue. What I said then and say now, is that he ought not to have violated the principles of the common agreement of 1870. Having put them on the rates deliberately, he ought to have accepted the consequence of his action and agreed that they should be fully under public control, and not give denominational teaching. What did he do? As to denominational teaching he violated that principle entirely. He continued denominational teaching in the now rate-aided schools. As to the matter of public control, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he arranged an ingenious scheme under which he hedged, if I may put it so. The denominational schools were to have six managers, the denomination to appoint four, and the public two. Does anybody think that that system can be maintained? I take the finance of it. At the present time, as we have heard from the hon. Member for the Walton Division, the maintenance of elementary schools council and non-provided is 62s. a year a child. I should think, although the figures are not now given by the Board of Education, that the maintenance of the non-provided school child is at the outside about 50s. on an average. Now, where does that 50s. come from? It is true the denominationalists make certain provision. They are responsible for the structural upkeep of the fabric. They also give the public the free use of their premises five days and three nights a week. I have gone into very elaborate calculations which I have not by me, and without haggling over it at all, and putting the highest possible outside value upon it, the structural upkeep of the fabric and the use of the rooms on five days and three nights in the week free to the public altogether is not more than about 5s. a child a year of the children in voluntary schools. Therefore there is 45s. of the maintenance cost left. Consequently the public is finding nine-tenths of the cost and at the very outside figure the denominationalist finds one-tenth. As against that the public gets two-sixths of the management, which I think I may put roughly at three-tenths. That is intolerable. This is not a Liberal or a Tory question, but a constitutional question. Is it tolerable that the public should find at least nine-tenths of the cost and have not more than three-tenths of the management? No, and it is because we do not think it tolerable—and I should like to hear any Gentleman opposite support the present system—that we brought in this Bill. We have distinguished support for our proposition from the leaders on the other side. Let me take two or three extracts which would appear to have escaped the attention of the hon. Member for the Walton Division. Lord Lansdowne, on 14th October, 1906, at Nottingham, said—

> "It should be clearly understood that the Unionist Party did not object to popular control and that they did not wish to impose religious tests upon teachers."

That is the principle of this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for West Birmingham, was more explicit in the matter of tests, for on 8th May, 1906, he said—

> "When a teacher comes forward to enter the State service there is no more reason, no more justice in exacting from him a profession of any particular religious opinion than in doing it in the case of the more important servants of the State."

We endeavoured to restore rate-aided education in the Bill of 1906, and I think the House will agree that, on the part of the Secretary for Ireland, it was a splendid endeavour he made in that direction. We spent forty-nine Parliamentary days over that endeavour. We passed the Second Reading by a majority of 206, and the Third Reading by a majority of 192, the largest Parliamentary majorities since the first Reform Bill. We sent the Bill up to another place, but I do not need to discuss what happened there. Curiously enough, the Government has so far been criticised from the other side of the House because, in the interest of educational peace and to meet sincere denominationalists, we have gone out of our way to make an exception to broad principles. I refer particularly to the attack on contracting out. It was criticised by the Leader of the Opposition, and by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone; in fact, the noble Lord associated himself with the criticism made by the hon. Member for North West Ham. It is rather curious but it is a fact that contracting out came in the first instance from the other side of the House. The Member for Glasgow University on the first clause of the Bill of 1906 moved to insert words which would have left it open for him afterwards to put in his scheme of contracting out. The proposal was supported by the Member for Cambridge University.

MR. BUTCHER: I have not opposed the principle to-night.

*DR. MACNAMARA: At any rate, then, the Government have one supporter on the other side of the House. The proposal was also supported in 1906 by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone, but circumstances of course alter cases. The hon. Member for the Glasgow University, who would not be associated with educational inefficiency under any circumstances, brought this proposal forward in the interests of variety in education, and after a discussion he asked leave to withdraw it, having satisfied himself with the expression of views on the subject. His Amendment was negatived without a division. When we came to Clause 4 of the Bill it was pointed out by denominationalists that the clause was not mandatory upon the local authority, and that there might be cases where the local authority would refuse to grant the extended facilities offered by the Bill, and then the denominationalists would not get what they claimed, namely, the right to have denominational teaching every day. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, who was then President of the Board of Education, added to Clause 4 a new sub-section, providing that where difficulties might arise between the local authority and the denominationalists the school might continue fully denominational, but without access to the rates, and be treated as a State-aided school. That was adopted in this House. I spoke and voted against it on the ground I then indicated, that I gravely feared that this kind of contracting-out system would mean a return to the educationally starved condition in which many of the voluntary schools were prior to 1902. Although I said then that they were starved hon. Gentlemen opposite would not have it. I immediately pressed a number of questions on my right hon. friend the present Chief Secretary, all designed to secure that in regard to the contracting-out of schools, the education given in them, and the teachers, should be maintained at the level of efficiency of the local authority schools of the country. He gave a number of assurances as to educational efficiency, and they were introduced into what became the contracting-out clause when it became Clause 5 in the final form of the Bill. The Bill went to another place, and when it was there Clause 3 in regard to ordinary facilities to denominational schools twice a week was made to extend the facilities to every day in the week. Clause 4 providing facilities every day for denominational teaching was made mandatory, and its operation was extended not only to urban but to rural districts. On the Report Stage in another place, Clause 3 was restored to its original form giving the ordinary facilities on two mornings of the week. But Clause 4 remained mandatory, and extended to all areas, urban and rural, and that removed any necessity at all for the contracting-out clause. Notwithstanding the fact that Clause 4 was made mandatory, the Archbishop of Canterbury brought up a carefully prepared scheme of contracting out which he placed before the House of Lords and desired to be inserted in the Bill as an additional safeguard. Therefore, the first word in favour of contracting out was spoken from the benches opposite in this House, and the last word was spoken from the ecclesiastical benches in another place. And now it is made a gibe against us, and especially against me, that in the interest of peace and harmony, and to meet the denominationalists, we have put in what if we were beginning *de novo* and writing on a clean slate we should not be prepared to entertain. My right hon. friend the Chief Secretary told me that he did not like contracting out. I said that I did not like it, though if educational efficiency were secured much of my objection to contracting out would disappear. I was afraid of going back to the starved condition prior to 1902. What was the Government grant to the denominational schools then? As far as I can make out, about 35s. or 36s. per head on an average. If this Bill passes, it will be 47s. per head.

I think those who are opposing contracting out had better look into this a little closely before attacking the proposal with such violence as they have done. Surely 47s. a child would be better than 35s. which marked the days when the Leader of the Opposition supported the proposal. No doubt the cost is much heavier in London and the big towns. But denominationalists must pool their liabilities. Surely rich districts like Belgravia might lend a helping hand to Bermondsey, even in London, and if that is done 47s. per head will go a great deal further than hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to think. I have studied the figures as well as I can, and I think the maintenance charge is not more than somewhere about 50s. per head on an average.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it is more.

*DR. MACNAMARA: There will be parts where it will be higher, as in London, and I suggest that the rich can pool their obligations. They did so formerly in 1897, and there is no reason why they should not do so again. Educational efficiency is all I care for, and I am convinced that it is safeguarded in the Bill. The terms of the Bill on the point were read out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I am sure that if anyone has any doubt about educational efficiency—I do not care from what quarter it comes—he has only to represent his views to the President of the Board of Education and they will be carefully considered. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that we are striking at educational efficiency, but if we did so, we should be aliens to all the traditions of Liberalism. I venture to think that if supporters of denominational schools look into the figures more closely, and understand what has been offered, they will come to the conclusion that a very stiff price is being paid for freedom from ecclesiastical and territorial influences in the villages. This is the last attempt which anybody can make at a reasonable compromise, and those who, like the hon. Member for the Walton Division, fight it recklessly must know that people are growing tired of this squabble, and that large sections of people in this country—even religiously-minded people—are inclined to give up in despair and to say that they cannot allow it to continue. Therefore, let hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite think twice, think thrice, before they continue opposition to this proposal, which in my opinion will make for educational efficiency, for justice, and for peace, and which is the only scheme that stands between them and what I would deplore, secular schools.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University): Before dealing with the contracting out proposals of the Bill, I wish to come to closer quarters with what has been called "the squalid controversy" which has led to the introduction of this Bill. It is a squalid controversy, and a provoking controversy; it is provoking because if people would only go into the schools of the country they would see that this religious difficulty practically does not exiet. In fact, the religious difficulty is the creature of the platform and of the Press and of this House. In nearly all the areas which would be affected by this Bill the religious difficulty is practically non-existent. The proof of this may be found in the history of the past few years. When the Secretary for Ireland introduced his Bill into the House and when it was debated for months, I could detect no enthusiasm for it anywhere, except the enthusiasm of hostility. When it disappeared we were told that terrible things would happen on account of its loss; but nothing has happened; the world has gone on much as before. Last year the President of the Board of Education introduced a transitory figure on to the legislative horizon a passive resister's relief Bill, but that has also disappeared and again nothing happened except some growls from the *British Weekly*. What is more illustrative of the quiet working of the present law than anything else is this—that there are, and have always been, two districts in the country where, in consequence of political agitation, injustice has been done from time to time to the voluntary schools. We have called attention from time to time to that injustice, but our efforts have been uniformly met by the sympathetic attitudes towards those who disobey the law adopted by the Board of Education as at present constituted; but in spite of this the trouble has never spread beyond those areas, and the Education Act is working quietly and harmoniously all over England, and to the great advantage of education generally. Why, then, are we to have this Bill? We are told that the Government and their supporters received a mandate for this Bill from the constituencies. I suppose that the fulfilment of every promise made by a candidate if he is elected is regarded as a mandate, and in the miscellaneous catalogue of promises made by the supporters of the Government, you may find what is now construed as a mandate in favour of popular control, the abolition of tests for teachers, and I suppose a remedy for the grievances of the single school areas. As regards these points I never suggested that the Act of 1902 was incapable of amendment, and if it can be shewn to me that absolute popular control over secular education was not given in that Act I would amend it in that sense. As regards tests for teachers, I do not think there is anyone on this side of the House or in any other part of it who is in favour of tests for teachers, otherwise than as a means for the ascertainment of their educational efficiency for the work which they are engaged to do. Then as to single school areas we have always admitted that we have not dealt successfully with that difficulty, and that it must sooner or later be dealt with. Therefore with reference to these three items, popular control, tests for teachers, and single school areas, what does this Bill do? Popular control is given away in every contracted out school, for every such school will be governed by its own managers according to their own wishes subject to the standard of efficiency required by the Board of Education. They will do as they like, and the teachers will be liable to any test the managers may think fit to impose. Popular control we are told, however, is to be found in the administration of the Board of Education, but the Board of Education does not appoint teachers, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed us that the main evidence of the existence of popular control consisted in the appointment of teachers. The Board of Education will not have anything to do with the test which the managers may see fit to impose. Public control then will be gone, and abolition of tests for teachers will be gone. What about single school areas? The grievance will remain in an aggravated form. We are told that as far as possible all single school areas will be dealt with alike, and an opportunity given to every child to be taught the religion which his parents desire. But we have single school areas all over the country in which it will be impossible henceforth for any teaching to be given to the child except what is called Cowper-Temple teaching. Upon this point we want to know what is a single school area and who is to determine what it is. Is a single school area a rural area, or is it any place in which the child has no access to a council school. If so, would that be an urban area, and would it be for the local authority to determine, because, if so, it puts a great power into the hands of that authority in regard to voluntary schools, for wherever the local authority may decide that a single school area exists the right is given to take over the school and use it for five days a week, without payment of rent by the local authority. I admit the policy of that part of the Bill. It is a very large and attractive bribe to local authorities. Under the Bill of 1906 wherever a voluntary school was transferred or taken over by the local authority it would either have to be bought or hired. The President of the Board of Education now proposes that it shall be neither bought nor hired, he improves upon that proposal and provides that it shall be confiscated. This would be of considerable advantage to the ratepayers and may be possibly an inducement to some sordid persons in the country to support the Bill, but it does not seem to me to be an honest way of dealing with single school areas. As to contracting out the Secretary of the Local Government Board accuses me of having been a supporter of it in the session of 1906. I opposed it throughout that session, and until I thought it had become a question of choice between educational efficiency and religious liberty. As to the Archbishop's declaration in regard to contracting out it was of the most limited nature, it was so received, and has no application to the present case. As regards contracting out, has the Board of Education seriously considered the cost of education in contracted-out schools? Certainly 47s. per child will not cover the cost of the education now given; it will be quite impossible on that amount, without great demands on the charity of their supporters, for the managers to keep up their schools to the standard of council schools, especially when they take into account that the salaries of the teachers are constantly increasing. Then there is the educational difficulty. By the Bill they will lose all the co-ordination which the present law allows, and questions arise as to the position of the voluntary schools in regard to medical inspection. Are these children to be excluded from this, and from any scheme of scholarships, or from the advantages of teaching in centres for cookery and the like? These are all matters on which we want some information. Then I would call attention to the hardship inflicted on those who have to keep up the contracted-out schools. They will have to pay the difference between 47s. and the cost of the maintenance of the schools which will come to at least 8s. a child, probably a good deal more, they will have to maintain the fabric of their buildings, and they will have to pay the rates for the council schools which will be maintained at a high level. That is to say, they will have to pay very heavily for the religious teaching they desire their children to have and very heavily for giving to other children a religious teaching they do not desire to have for their own children. The Bill proposes to endow undenominationalism at the expense of the community. The taxpayer may pay for Anglican, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or Cowper-Temple teaching, but the ratepayer, whether he supports the denominational school or not, will have to pay for Cowper-Temple teaching. What is Cowper-Temple teaching? It is the teaching of those elements of our common Christianity which are determined to be such by the London County Council. May I ask if this is final, or whether the county council will be permitted from time to time to revise the common elements of our Christianity, and substitute other doctrines at its pleasure, according to the results of the last county council election? Are you quite sure that under the Bill the grievance of the passive resister will not arise in another form, that others may have consciences as well as your Nonconformist friends? The grievance of the passive resister was that possibly an infinitesimal portion of the rate which he paid might go to pay for teaching the Church catechism to an Anglican child. You are now creating a grievance far more serious than this. I can see no genuine attempt in this Bill to deal with the educational difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman has justly described the Bill as the coming sword. It is a sword.

Mr. McKENNA: I never said that.

*Sir WILLIAM ANSON: If the right hon. Gentleman has been wrongly reported, I am sorry, but he was reported to have said so. It is a sword which may possibly turn against himself. Anyway, this Bill is not an educational, but a political Bill. It is designed to promote the interests of a political Party, and the right hon. Gentleman in legislation, I am afraid I must say as in administration, has used his power to do an injury to the religious life and educational efficiency of our country.

Mr. McKENNA: I will not detain the House more than a few moments while I endeavour to reply to some of the observations which have fallen from the hon. Baronet. Let me, in the first place, express my gratitude to the House for the reception which, on the whole, the Bill has received. Of course, the subject with which it deals is a difficult one. If it were easy, it would have been settled long ago. I naturally expect criticism. It is bound to come from every side of the House, but I hope, during the course of the debates, we shall be able eventually to hit on the solution which will settle this question. The hon. Baronet, if he will allow me to say so, has really taken an entirely erroneous view. It is not proposed to put denominationalism on the taxes and Cowper-Templeism on the rates. What it is proposed to do is this. The voluntary schools will no longer be public elementary schools; they will be schools at which the attendance of children will be purely voluntary. The children will get such religious instruction in those schools as the parents wish for them. But outside the religious instruction there will be the secular instruction in the schools, and that secular instruction will be superintended by the Board of Education. Under the express terms of the Bill that secular instruction has got to be maintained at the same level as the secular instruction given in the public elementary schools. What the Government grant is to be used for is to pay for this secular instruction. I submit to the House that the grant now proposed is an ample grant for the maintenance of efficiency in these voluntary schools. I have been asked whether there will be any balance of fairness, and what will be the terms on which schools will be contracted out. They will not be contracted out. They will be voluntary schools under private management and control, but under the Bill, provided they fulfil the conditions that apply to them, they will be entitled to receive the grant. The hon. Baronet asked about medical inspection. It will be conducted by the local authority. I am thankful to say there is no religious controversy about medical inspection, and there is no difficulty therefore in dealing with it through the local authority. The cost of medical inspection will, like the other cost of administration by the local authority, be borne by the local authority. The same may be said of other matters which were put to me by the hon. Baronet. In regard to scholarships, children coming from the voluntary schools will be as much entitled to obtain scholarships in the secondary schools as children coming from the public elementary schools. For all such purposes these voluntary schools will be treated as certified efficient schools entitled to all the benefits of certified efficient schools. With regard to scholarships, that is a matter which will be dealt with under the secondary school regulation, and I can assure the hon. Baronet that the elementary schools will receive the same treatment as the public elementary schools. Then he spoke about harsh treatment in the single school areas, and of the proposal to take these schools without payment of rent as confiscation. I can only say if I may use the word that that is a mere abuse of language. These schools are held under trusts, and the purposes of the trust have to be fulfilled. If the purposes of the trust are not fulfilled by the local education authority taking over the school, and giving the elementary education which the trust requires in that school, the trust would fail. Then the only course open to the trustees would be to apply for a new scheme. If the trustees of a trust like this which had failed in its purpose for want of funds were to apply to the Board or even to the Courts for a new scheme for carrying on that trust, the Board or the Courts would in all probability make a scheme exactly upon the lines of this Bill. That is to say, they would regard it as the nearest user of the trust which was obtainable, and offer the building to the local authority for educational purposes on five days of the week, and to reserve it for denominational purposes on the other two days of the week. This building has to be maintained in perpetuity, to be kept furnished, lighted warmed, and cleaned. Under the ordinary purposes of the trust as it is now executed no fuller denominational instruction is given than would be given under this Bill. If it is proposed to pay rent, to whom should it be paid? It is the local authority which is in part carrying on the purposes of the trust. It must be remembered that this scheme is only proposed in respect of what are known as tight trusts, trusts which are tied up for educational purposes, and in which, consequently, the educational purposes cannot be divorced from the general purposes of the trust. Privately-owned schools can be transferred to the local authority or not, just as the private owner desires. If the local authority offered the private owner reasonable terms I presume the private owner would take them. If he is in a single-school district he can ask for terms. With regard to facilities in a single-school district, he can also insist on Cowper-Temple instruction always being given in that school. Every security is given to the owners of trusts other than tight trusts that they shall receive full rent such as they can agree on with the local authority for the use of their building. A private owner can do what he likes with his building; he can sell or let it to the local authority for what rent he can get. There is no proposal to confiscate or appropriate anybody's property. Every private owner and the trustees of every non-tied trust school will be allowed to make such bargain as they think most suitable for themselves. The hon. Member for the Walton Division of Liverpool has stood in conjunction with the Bishop of Manchester in behalf of parental rights. This Bill, for the first time, recognises parental rights. It is to be a condition now, which it has never been before, that a voluntary school shall only be kept in being if the parents of the children wish. No parents hereafter are to be compelled to send their children to schools other than public elementary schools. That is the claim on behalf of the parents put forward now for the first time. I am sure that if that is accepted it will go a great way, if not altogether, to stifle the religious controversy. I cannot help thinking that much of the objection to this Bill arises from the fact, not that we are giving what is called contracting out, not that it is proposed to give generous terms to the voluntary schools, not that it is proposed to take the schools in the single school parishes. The real objection, I cannot help thinking, is that voluntary schools hereafter will have to be carried on in conformity with the wishes of the parents, and that no Church or Catholic or Jewish or denominational schools of any kind can hope to continue in existence unless children of the particular persuasion to which the school belongs can be found to attend it. I do not wish to labour this point, but I am most anxious, particularly at this stage of the Bill, not to enter into any serious controversial matter, but I have been bound to make these few observations, and I beg now that the House will allow this Bill to have a first reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. McKenna, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Lough.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

"To regulate the conditions on which public money may be applied in aid of Elementary Education in England and Wales; and for other purposes incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 112.]

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: May I ask the Government how soon we shall have in our hands the print of the Bill?

Mr. McKENNA: I hope it will be circulated with the Papers on Wednesday morning.

Adjourned at two minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 25th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc.; Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc. Also the Certificates that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have not been complied with. London United Tramways. West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways. Croydon and Southern District Tramways.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

PERSIA, No. 1 (1908).

Extract from a despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India in Council, dated 21st September, 1899, relating to British Policy in Persia which was referred to in the debate on the Anglo-Russian Convention, which took place in the House of Lords on the 6th and 10th February, 1908.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904 (COUNTY OF ANGLESEY).

Order made by the county council of Anglesey, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the parish of Holyhead.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853-1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Mary Ann Guest, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution, 35, Eden Grove, Holloway.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.

No. 555. St. Vincent (Report for 1906–1907).

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL, 1908.

Memorandum of the Board of Education on the financial proposals in connection with the Education Bill, 1908.

CHINA, No. 1 (1908).

Correspondence respecting the opium question in China, with map.

RAILWAY, ETC., BILLS.

Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and Provisional Orders of Session 1908, relating to railways, canals, tramways, harbours, and tidal waters, and the supply of electricity, gas and water.

NEW BILLS.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [H.L.] (No. 20).

A Bill to consolidate the enactments relating to agricultural holdings in England and Wales. And

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [H.L.] (No. 21).

A Bill to consolidate the enactments with respect to small holdings and allotments in England and Wales.

Were presented by the Earl Carrington; read 1^{a}, and to be printed.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL. [H.L.]

[Second Reading.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, in order to put before the House more clearly the object and effect of this Bill I must ask your Lordships' indulgence for a few moments while I remind you of what occurred with reference to this question of Scottish small holdings in the last session of Parliament. Your Lordships will remember that on 13th August last a Bill was presented to this House by the Government, which had for its object the crofterisation of the whole of Scotland. By the first clause in that Bill a crofter was no longer to be called

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

a crofter but a landholder, and all difference between crofters and small holders was thereby abolished. But while this difference was abolished, all the crofter legislation, which, as your Lordships well know, was passed to meet an exceptional state of things, was extended to the whole of Scotland These crofter laws were for the future to be spread over the whole of Scotland, and the small landholder, as he was to be constituted, was to be a favoured class. He was to have fixity of tenure in the first place; but, besides that, he was not to pay rates in the same degree or under the same conditions as other holders of land. The Bill also established dual ownership. I am aware that in the other House that was denied both by the Secretary for Scotland and by the Lord Advocate, but every man who knows anything about the nature of land, and of ownership, knows quite well that that Bill took away from the landlord many of the privileges and rights of ownership and transferred them to the State; and it is quite enough for me in this contention, which I need not pursue further, that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, who is superior to the legal quibbles and refinements which seem at the present time to prevail in the Scottish office, admitted freely that dual ownership would be set up for the future in Scotland.

The Prime Minister had stated that the rights of ownership were too great to be entrusted to private individuals. Well, what did that Bill do? It took five or six individuals and virtually entrusted to them ownership over the greater part of Scotland. And I observed that when we came to discuss the rather strange, and extraordinary, and revolutionary state of things that was to be created, noble Lords opposite appeared not to be very confident in their Bill or in its merits. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, who introduced the Bill, explained its provisions; but he gave us no reasons whatever for the somewhat violent conclusions to which it led. Noble Lords opposite connected with Scotland were challenged over and over again to give reasons for this revolutionary change. Why, I cannot say, but they all abstained from giving any reasons; and the result was that your Lordships never, throughout the whole of the debate, heard any reason why these changes were proposed. Is it surprising that your Lordships, under those circumstances, determined to wait to see what was proposed for England?

When the English Bill came up it was sufficiently drastic. It made a very great alteration in the law of 1892, which was the law for both England and Scotland. It provided that in future county councils were to have the initiative with regard to forming small holdings, and that if they failed to perform their duties or were remiss in giving attention to the matter, the Commissioners who were to be appointed by, and to report to, the Board of Agriculture, were to step in. That Bill, as your Lordships know, was subsequently passed into law, and when it had left this House and the Scottish Bill was resumed Lord Lansdowne intimated that if the Bill should be read a second time a very searching examination would take place in Committee, and, without doubt, considerable Amendments would be proposed. At first blush the noble Marquess who leads the House—I do not know whether it was by accident—said he would go on with the Bill; but a few hours consideration convinced him that that course was impossible at that time, and therefore the Government dropped the Bill.

I lay emphasis on the word "dropped," because it was subsequently stated in Scotland by supporters of the Government that your Lordships had rejected that Bill. Your Lordships did nothing of the kind. What your Lordships said was this, that up to the time the Bill reached this House it had not been examined in the manner in which it ought to have been, that a great part of it had been passed under the closure and the gag, and that in Committee of the Whole House there had been no means of going through the Bill and making those minute criticisms which it undoubtedly deserved and required. In order to emphasise this I would read a statement which was made on February 13 by the Prime Minister, whose indisposition we all deplore. He said—

> "It was obvious that in the last days of August so large an operation as the Committee on this Bill could not be carried out and discussed in both Houses during what remained of the session. It became, I will not say impossible, but obviously extremely difficult, to arrive at a reconciliation of the views of the

advocates and the opponents of the Bill. Therefore this Bill came to a natural end."

That leads me to the circumstances which immediately preceded the introduction of the Bill now before your Lordships. This proposed change in Scotland was undoubtedly a very large, wide, and important change. It was considered, I believe, by every owner of land, and by all persons interested in the management of land, and the result we all came to was that we could see no reason why exceptional legislation should be brought in for Scotland. If the law of last year is good for England, why is it not good for Scotland? Up to August last the law for the two countries was the same, and, as your Lordships will remember, in 1906 the Government insisted with regard to the tenure of land that the same Bill should apply to England and to Scotland. Why, then, is a difference to be made now?

The result of these considerations is that I have ventured to draw up the Bill which I am now submitting to your Lordships. The principles of this Bill are the same as the principles of the English Bill of last year. My Bill proceeds on this understanding, that a crofter is an entirely different person from a small landholder, that the Acts under which he came into existence were exceptional Acts which provided that in future no more crofting holdings should be created, and that the crofters themselves have never asked for an extension of the crofting Acts to all Scotland. What they said was that there are certain defects in those Acts, certain disadvantages under which they labour which they wish to have removed. So far as I know, those who represent the crofting districts have never said more than that. On the other hand, is it desirable, when the law for England and Scotland has hitherto been the same, that a difference should be made, although in the Lowlands of Scotland exactly the same conditions prevail as throughout England?

Now, let me take the clauses of my Bill. Your Lordships will find that the first five clauses, which are almost identical, indeed, I think I may say quite identical, with those in the English Act, give the initiative in regard to small holdings to county councils, and, as your Lordships have already heard, if the county councils fail to perform their duties, then come in the Commissioners and the Board of Agriculture. What objection can be taken to that proposal? I believe it is one which in their hearts several members of the Government approve. Not only so, but the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty expressly told us, in a speech at Perth, that this way of beginning the provision of small holdings is the right and the only proper way to proceed. I will read to your Lordships exactly what Lord Tweedmouth said. He said—

> "I like the arrangements of the English Bill better, where the local authorities are brought in and take a considerable part in the management and arrangement of small holdings. I do not believe that the burgh councils and county councils in Scotland would be a bit less energetic in taking their part if the Act were passed than in other things. It is a mistake not to bring in the local authorities, who have charge of local affairs, and are best acquainted with the wants of the different districts in the country."

I do not know what course my noble friend is going to take to-day, but, at all events, up to 9th November last, he was of opinion that this was the only proper mode of proceeding.

Again, I am sure the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture must approve of this proposal. How can he do otherwise? This is the proposal which he made in regard to England, and which he so loudly praised in your Lordships' House on many occasions. The noble Earl has been celebrating the Act and the way in which it has been carried out, with a somewhat loud trumpet. It is rather early in the day to say what is going to be the result of the Act of last year. At all events, up to the present the noble Earl is extremely well satisfied with the progress it has made. In a little preface which he wrote to a book upon the Act by Mr. Corrie Grant, M.P., the noble Earl says—

> "The English Act is the most potent instrument for the regeneration of our rural life which this generation has produced, and contains boundless possibilities of good in the future."

What praise could be greater than that? I am sure that my noble friend who has secured these blessings for England will not be so selfish as to wish to deprive us of them in Scotland.

Then, my Lords, who objects to this proposal? So far as I can find, there is only one objector—the Secretary for

Scotland. It must have been rather a disappointment when the Secretary for Scotland read my noble friend's speech at Perth, but, as we know, the members of this Government not infrequently have a way of answering one another; and on this occasion Mr. Sinclair's way of accounting for my noble friend's temporary aberration was by saying that he lives in the rather bad company of this House, and that he is a most zealous, able, and capable county councillor, who has been led away by sympathy with his colleagues. Leaving the bad company here out of consideration, at all events he admits that my noble friend is a most zealous, able, and capable county councillor, and I should like to ask my noble friend, in that capacity, does he consider that the county councils in Scotland are less able or less energetic than the county councils in England? I should like to ask the noble Earl (Lord Elgin) who sits next to him the same question, for he has been for many years a county councillor in Scotland.

There is another objection which Mr. Sinclair takes to this proposal. He says the Scottish county councils have not worked the Act of 1892. To begin with, I am not at all sure that that is correct. At least, it certainly is not correct of some county councils. There is one county council which I can answer for—the county council of Forfar. We did everything we could to put that Act into operation. We inserted advertisements in the local Press and made inquiries of every description, but we obtained no applications whatever. But, even supposing these county councils have been somewhat remiss, was not the same thing said of county councils in England? What has been the means taken to "ginger," if I may use the word, the English county councils? Why, the appointments of these Commissioners, who are to perform their duties if they fail. Why should not the same remedy be applied to Scottish county councils which fail as is applied to county councils which fail in England?

Then there is another argument—namely, that the Scottish county councils are non-representative. I suppose that argument is put forward seriously, but it is difficult to believe it. The only reason given for it is that in every county in Scotland there are remote and inaccessible districts and members find it difficult to attend. Does that mean that the county council is not elected by the most democratic franchise that exists? And apart from the crofting counties of Scotland, where a different administration prevails, I do not believe it is true that access is more difficult to the county town in Scottish counties than in many counties in England. The difficulties are just as great in the one as in the other. The last argument I propose to notice is that in Scotland we are not accustomed to overriding one another. When the Secretary for Scotland says that, he can hardly be aware of his own existence or of his own duties. Why, the central board of Scotland are continually and in every province overruling the local authority. As usual, Mr. Sinclair furnished an answer to himself, because he said, in another sentence, that we are more accustomed to centralisation in Scotland than are the people of England.

I leave that, and come to Clauses 6 and 7 of the Bill, and there a very real and considerable difference is made from what exists in the English Act. Your Lordships will see that a county council may, for the purpose of providing small holdings for persons who desire to buy or lease, purchase land and so on; and in Clause 7 it is provided that land acquired by a county council for the purpose of small holdings may be adapted for sale or letting. In subsection 2 there is a provision that if a county council are unable, by agreement, to acquire suitable land, they may acquire land compulsorily for this purpose. Therefore, the change which this clause proposes to make in the English Act is that it gives power to a county council to resell land which it has compulsorily acquired for the purpose of creating new ownerships. I know that His Majesty's Government entertain a most rooted objection to a proposal of this sort, but I ask them why. This clause does not compel county councils to buy for the purpose of resale; it only gives them the power to buy for purposes of resale, and the power to resell.

Why are the Government so alarmed at the mere notion of purchase and resale? Lord Tweedmouth is not averse to this at all, because in the same speech from which I have quoted, he said this—

> "In my humble judgment a small holder has a much better chance for himself to hold land

as a leaseholder than as a proprietor. I am not arguing against a man becoming a proprietor, but I believe the ordinary man would prefer to take it under a lease than to purchase."

With every word of that I agree. It is perfectly consistent with what is proposed in this clause. It is only a power which is given to sell to tenants, and that power is only given for the purpose of possibly increasing the number of small owners. I always thought that one of the great objects of the Liberal Party was to increase the number of small holders. Why have they changed? The noble Earl, Lord Rosebery, says—and I fully agree with him—that, in a matter of this kind, when a nation proposes a large change of this sort it ought to pay for it and ought to purchase the land. I am quite willing to concede what is conceded in the English Act, and to agree that the land may be let; but what reason is there why the land should not also be capable of resale? This Government always calls itself a Government of Free Trade. Why are you tying up land in a way and with a knot which it would puzzle any grand mother to untie? It has been very freely whispered that the reason why this Government are so opposed to resale and to any creation of additional owners is that their Socialistic supports in the other House of Parliament are deadly opposed to any increase of owners and rather wish the land to become the property of the State.

I would next call your Lordship's attention to Clause 19 and the subsequent clauses—those which have to do with allotments. I can describe these to your Lordships very shortly. They are merely to make the law the same in Scotland as it is in England. At the present time the county council is the authority with regard to allotments, and these clauses transfer those powers to the parish. There is the subsequent power that, in the event of the parish authorities not acting, the county councils may be called upon to step in and do their work.

I apologise to your Lordships for detaining you so long. I shall only call your attention to one more clause—Clause 27. That is the clause which contains the restrictions on the acquisition of land. The clause as it stands does not materially differ from the clause in the English Act, but I have taken it verbatim from Mr. Sinclair's Bill, as I thought that possibly might be regarded as more appropriate. There are some Scottish terms in it, which, perhaps, make Mr. Sinclair's clause rather preferable to the English clause. Then I would call your Lordship's attention to Subsection 3, which is also taken from Mr. Sinclair's Bill. In the English Act fifty acres or a rent of £50 is the limit below which land cannot be taken from the cultivator. I thought, at the time the English Bill was passing through this House, that fifty acres was a very small limit. For that reason I have taken the words in Mr. Sinclair's Bill—a farm not exceeding 150 acres occupied by a person who has no interest in any other farm—and I have also respected existing leases.

That concludes the description of the main clauses in this Bill which differ from the English Act. I would ask the Government to apply this English law to Scotland. Why for the first time are you to create a difference between English and Scottish small holdings? The conditions in the Lowlands are exactly the same as those in England. They differ very materially from the conditions which prevail in what are known as the crofting counties. When a statesman wishes to make a change in the law, what course does he usually adopt? Does he not endeavour to make that change as smooth as possible? Does he not endeavour to avoid friction as far as he can? If your Lordships adopt this Bill it seems to me that you will do away with a great deal of friction, and you will make the passing of the Bill much easier. Why, if you wish to pass a Bill, do you insist upon beginning with the most violent legislation you can devise, and more especially when you do not produce one tittle of proof that the Bill is demanded? Surely you might at least give a trial to this less drastic measure before you proceed to the more violent, if you really wish to improve the law relating to small holdings in Scotland. I do not know whether—I am afraid it is too much to hope—the Government are going to look on this Bill with a favourable eye. I hope they will. But, if they will not, at all events I do consider that they are bound to give to this House and to the country, and more especially to Scotland, the reasons why they hold that a Bill which they maintain is well adapted to, and is at the present time working well in England is not applicable to those parts of Scotland where the conditions are exactly the same. I beg to move.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I think perhaps it will be for the general convenience of the House if I proceed, even at this very early stage, to state the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards this Bill. For some reason or other which is not quite clear to us, the noble Earl who has just sat down regards the discussion of this subject to-day as being exceedingly urgent. He first, I think, placed the notice on the Paper for yesterday, but withdrew it on account of the interesting debate which took place on the subject of the Congo. To-day, however, he has been able to take advantage of the rule which gives precedence to Bills on Tuesdays. For some time past Lord Newton has had a Motion on the Paper dealing with probably the most important and interesting question of foreign affairs which it would be possible for your Lordships to discuss; but, in spite of that fact, the noble Earl, Lord Camperdown, has thought it necessary to proceed with his Bill, and has relegated the noble Lord opposite into an unknown but probably somewhat distant background.

What the motive of urgency in the noble Earl's mind has been I confess I have not been able to understand. I thought for a time that he was oppressed by an undelivered speech, that his vitals were, so to speak, being rent by it, and that serious consequences might ensue if it were not got rid of to-day. But the speech to which we have just listened disposes of that theory. It was, of course, like all the noble Earl's speeches, a very good speech; it was a very moderate speech, and I think, in the main, an extremely good-humoured speech. But there was nothing in it which would not have kept perfectly well for a week if the noble Earl had been disposed to postpone for so long the discussion of this question. Then it might have been the noble Earl's motive in some way to embarrass His Majesty's Government — a perfectly legitimate party move, but, as a matter of fact, there is no embarrassment to us in the matter being brought forward as it is to-day, though, for reasons which I shall shortly state, we do object to the appearance of the Bill at this particular moment.

The noble Earl gave an account of what happened last year. Last session the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack moved the Second Reading of the Government Bill on 13th August. I admit that that was exceedingly late, but the lateness of that date was largely due to the very long discussion which had taken place on the subject upstairs in the other House. Your Lordships, as has been stated very truly, did not reject the measure, and if anybody went about saying you did, he undoubtedly stated what was not the case. The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition said on 14th August—

> "I venture accordingly to suggest that we should adjourn further consideration of this Bill until we have had before us the English Small Holdings Bill. When that Bill has been discussed and disposed of, I recommend that we should resume the consideration of the Scottish Bill, and that we should add to it clauses dealing with small holdings, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same lines as those on which the question of small holdings is dealt with in the English Bill. Further, I would propose that we should amend the Scottish Bill by adding to it some Amendments as to crofters which we believe to be necessary."

Then, again, at a later stage, after some discussion had taken place, the noble Marquess repeated that expressed intention in words which I need not quote; and finally, on 21st August, the Bill, as the noble Earl has said, was withdrawn. It was withdrawn, as the Prime Minister clearly stated, because at that time of the session, and the attitude of noble Lords opposite being perfectly clear, there was nothing to be gained from any point of view by proceeding with it.

The autumn followed, giving time for reflection on both sides, and for inquiry as to the sentiments of Scotland, the country concerned; and on their responsibility His Majesty's Government announced in the Gracious Speech from the Throne that this Bill would be brought in again, and brought in again it accordingly has been in another place, and it will be due to arrive here, I imagine, in the course of this week. That fact has been ignored, I may say ostentatiously ignored, by the noble Earl who has introduced this Bill. The fact that this measure has been again introduced in another place by His Majesty's responsible advisers is one to which he has not thought fit to allude. Therefore I think that we must assume that both he and the other noble Lord, Lord Lovat, who has also got a Scottish Land Bill on the Paper, have purposely ignored that fact.

Now, I take two objections to the discussion of this Bill to-day. The first objection is that it seems to me to be treating my noble and learned friend on the Woolsack, who will have charge of the Government measure, with very scant courtesy, and there is no Member of your Lordships' House who has done less to deserve treatment of that kind, because I know noble Lords opposite would agree that he has shown invariable courtesy to his opponents. The position of Liberal Ministers in this House can never be an easy one. It has been said that this world is a school for saints, and we Liberal Ministers look upon your Lordships as one of the hardest-worked classes in that school. But if this kind of thing is going to take place, it will not only be a school for saints, but a school for martyrs. I regard, with some alarm, the prospect of similar tactics being pursued in regard to the Education Bill or Education Bills. I can conceive at least seven different Education Bills, which might be brought in from different quarters of the House—at least three from the Episcopal Bench, and four or five from other quarters. If it became the practice that independent Members were to bring in Bills of their own in order to anticipate Government measures, all I can say is that the prospect is one which fills me personally with something very like horror.

My second objection is that I think it is impossible to regard this discussion to-day, if it takes place, as anything but an intentional and deliberate slight to the other House. The other House, representing the opinion of the country by a very large majority, and—whatever noble Lords may think of the opinion of Scotland or its Parliamentary representation—at all events representing the opinion of a vast majority of the Scottish Members, are going again to send up this Bill to your Lordships' House for discussion. When it comes you can deal with it as you please. You may throw it out on the Second Reading, or you may amend it in the fashion suggested by the noble Marquess opposite. That is a course of which we should naturally not approve, but it is one which your Lordships are perfectly competent to take. Or, if you like, after throwing it out, if you do throw it out, the noble Lord might have brought in his Bill and it could be discussed on its merits. [The Earl of HALSBURY dissented.] I think the noble and learned Earl is right on the technical point, but it would have been perfectly easy to have pursued the course adopted last year. The Bills could have run concurrently, and your Lordships could have selected the one you preferred. But, for some reason or another, which I confess I am unable to understand, all these various courses have been deliberately abandoned, and I shall await with curiosity to know whether the noble Earl is acting as a *frondeur* in this matter, or whether this proceeding has the approval of noble Lords on the Front Bench opposite. All I can say is that we cannot take any part in what we consider the flouting of the other House in this matter; and consequently it is altogether impossible for us on this side of the House to participate in the discussion of this Bill to-day.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, although I hope this discussion may be prolonged, I desire to rise at once for the purpose of protesting against the manner in which His Majesty's Government are treating, not only my noble friend Lord Camperdown, but this House, in regard to this most important Bill. We certainly were under the impression that His Majesty's Government would welcome an opportunity of discussing alternative proposals of the kind contained in my noble friend's Bill. The noble Earl now tells us that, far from welcoming such a discussion, he complains of us because, by my noble friend's action, we are invited to ignore the Bill of the Government now before the House of Commons. No, my Lords, we do not ignore the Government Bill which is before the House of Commons, because we know what that Bill is. The Bill before the House of Commons is, I believe, almost *verbatim et literatim* the Bill which came before this House last year—a Bill which we discussed very fully, and which, so far as I am aware, is entirely unsupported by any sufficient statement of reasons on the part of the Government.

Why is there, as the noble Earl alleges, any discourtesy to the House of Commons in laying our proposals before this House and before the country? Is it not, on the contrary, most desirable that both Houses of Parliament and the people of this country should be aware of the manner in which, in our view, this question of small holdings in Scotland should be dealt with. Equally unreasonable is, I think, the complaint that my noble friend or those who are acting with him desire to show any discourtesy to the noble and and learned Lord on the Woolsack. Let me say at once that there is no one on these Benches who would be a party to any action which could be reasonably construed as involving discourtesy towards one whom we so highly respect. But, my Lords, I go further. I venture to maintain that in producing this Bill we are doing exactly what the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack last year invited us to do.

Your Lordships will not have forgotten that when the Government Bill was introduced in this House, my noble friend Lord Balfour of Burleigh met it by a reasoned Amendment, according to the terms of which he made it plain that he and others were desirous of extending, so far as was reasonable, the system of small holdings in Scotland, and of introducing necessary amendments in the crofter laws affecting that country. What did the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack say to that Amendment? These are his words—

> "The Amendment begins by stating that this House is 'anxious to encourage the formation of small holdings under reasonable conditions.' I welcome that sentiment; but I should like to know what are reasonable conditions. It is an excellent sentiment, too, that we should 'consider favourably such fair amendment of the Acts relating to the tenure of crofter holdings as experience may have shown to be necessary.' But what has experience shown to be necessary? It deprecates an 'indiscriminate and universal extension of the crofting system.' Very good, but what is the discriminate and partial system which meets with the approval of the noble Lord?"

That was a challenge from the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack that we should produce our rival schemes for dealing, on the one hand, with the question of small holdings, and, on the other, with the question of crofters. That challenge has been taken up by my noble friend Lord Camperdown and by another noble Lord from Scotland in regard to crofters, and we are here to invite your Lordships to consider fairly and with an open mind those alternative proposals. We are ready that these proposals should be examined and tested by the very tests which you yourselves desire to apply.

I venture again to recall the speech made by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. The noble and learned Lord told your Lordships that His Majesty's Government had three objects in view — first, to do something to mitigate the evils of overcrowding; secondly, to increase the number of small holdings in Scotland; and, thirdly, to introduce a system which would afford sufficient security of tenure for small holders. We maintain that the proposals embodied in my noble friend's Bill will carry out every one of the objects which His Majesty's Government had in view last year, and which, I presume, they have in view this year, not only as efficaciously as the Government plan, but a great deal more efficaciously, and with a great deal less friction and inconvenience. As to the question of overcrowding, let me say quite frankly that I do not for an instant believe that either the Government Bill or this Bill is likely to make a very marked or immediate impression upon the evils of overcrowding. The gathering of population in our large cities is, in my belief, due to causes other than the system of land tenure which prevails in these islands. That is, I believe, a matter that can be demonstrated, and I do not consider that any legislation of this kind is likely to have any marked effect in mitigating those evils which we should all so gladly see removed.

That has, I believe, been admitted, amongst others, by the President of the Local Government Board, who delivered last autumn, I think, a most interesting speech to a deputation of foreign delegates, in which he pointed out, with unanswerable force, that there was going on, not only in this country but in every civilised country, a process which he described as the urbanisation of the population. I believe that is true, and I believe that urbanisation has little, if anything, to do with the system of land tenure. And I must say that it does seem to me sometimes that it is not quite ingenuous to represent, as some public speakers do, to audiences in crowded cities, that the whole of the evils from which they suffer and their gloomy and miserable surroundings can be got rid of, as it were, by the touch of a magician's wand, and that it is possible by means of legislation of this kind to open up for the denizens of these crowded cities a vista of employment under almost idyllic conditions in rural districts. It is easy to get cheers for statements of that kind, but I am afraid that many of them are greatly lacking in sincerity.

Then, my Lords, I take the second object—the increase in the number of small holdings. Will anyone tell me that my noble friend's Bill is not every bit as likely to lead to an increase in the number of small holdings in Scotland as the Government measure? Why should it not? You have your local authorities in Scotland, and you give them the same powers which you give to the local authorities in England. Why are we to be told that a measure which is to succeed so triumphantly in England is certain to be a failure on the other side of the Border? My noble friend has already called attention to the fact that the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture, in this House and out of it, never opens his lips without giving a jubilant account of the magnificent results produced by that "potent instrument for the regeneration of our rural life" Why is it that that which is a triumphant success on this side of the Tweed is to be a failure on the other side, in regions which, except for the fact that some of them are on one side and some on the other of the Border, do not differ in any particular upon which anybody can lay his finger?

Then as to the question of security, will anyone tell me that the Bill of my noble friend does not provide for those who might become occupiers of small holdings under it security of the most adequate and complete kind? I say, therefore, that it can be shown that my noble friend's Bill really attains all the objects which His Majesty's Government have set themselves to attain by this legislation; and this Bill secures those objects without doing a great many other things which the legislation of His Majesty's Government would certainly not fail to do. It attains the desired results without setting up an arbitrary distinction between the two sides of the border, and without creating a confusion of tenure the like of which never has been known, I will venture to say, in the agricultural system of any civilised country. Imagine the condition of things under which you might have side by side upon the same estate, in the same parish, one holding of forty-eight acres held under the Irish system, and another holding of fifty-two acres held under the system which at present prevails in Scotland. Could anything be more unsatisfactory or more calculated to produce friction and inconvenience?

Moreover, my noble friend's Bill avoids putting on Scottish local authorities the outrageous affront that is involved in the Bill of the Government. That in itself seems to me to be a great recommendation. I say nothing of the fact that my noble friend's Bill does not inflict on the landowners of Scotland, I can use no gentler word, the intolerable wrong of compelling them to remain subject to many of the most onerous liabilities attaching to the ownership of property, and at the same time divesting them entirely of that control—I use the word advisedly—which, to my mind, is essential to ownership as we understand it in this country. Is it not also true to say that while my noble friend's Bill gives security of tenure, it does not strike the same fatal blow at the system of Scottish agriculture under which such brilliant results have been achieved for the agricultural community of that part of the United Kingdom?

If we are to have any more speeches from the Front Bench opposite, I should like to be told by some responsible Minister whether there is any country in which there is to be found the kind of system of land tenure which would unquestionably come into existence if the Bill of the Government were to become law. We can prove all these things, and there is another thing we can prove —namely, that the agricultural community of Scotland is solid in its preference for the proposal of my noble friend rather than the Government's proposal. Up to the present time we have hardly heard a single argument in support of the Government proposal as against that which is now before your

Lordships. We are constantly told that there is a difference between Scotland and England, and that regard must be had to the peculiar conditions of Scotland. Well, my Lords, let me say this, that I believe if there is a difference between the Scottish agricultural system and the agricultural system which we know south of the Border, it is that the Scottish agricultural system is less fitted for the kind of legislation which His Majesty's Government propose even than our system in England. I should like to read to your Lordships one sentence from an essay contained in a very useful little publication on land tenures issued under the auspices of the Cobden Club. The author is Mr. Hoskins, who, I believe, was a very well-known writer on agricultural questions. He wrote—

> "In Scotland, owing to the diffusion of education and the greater powers enjoyed by the owners of entailed estates, a more commercial and business-like independence in the general economy of land and farm management had grown up than south of the Border."

Yet it is in that part of the United Kingdom, where you have the more commercial and businesslike system in existence, that you are going to introduce these preposterous and new fangled doctrines.

The only other argument I have heard is that the Scottish county councils are too much of a landlord complexion. That, again, I believe to be a very gross misrepresentation. My attention was attracted by a very interesting statement which appeared not long ago in the *Scotsman*, a journal which is distinguished not only by great ability but by the caution of its utterances. The writer was able to say that in only one county — the county of Roxburgh—has the landed interest the semblance of a preponderance, and that preponderance is so slight that the result of the forthcoming election in a single electoral division may finish it. In Aberdeen landlords and factors do not muster more than one-third of the county council; in Perth, the landlord interest is represented by twenty-five out of sixty; in Forfarshire by eleven out of fifty; in Ayrshire by twenty-five out of fifty-seven, and so on. The statements that follow are quite sufficient to demolish that contention. I venture to think that we have heard nothing in this House or out of it, to show that the Scottish county councils are not perfectly well fitted to undertake the important duties which this Bill would place in their hands; and believing that this Bill, which, after all, follows closely upon the lines which His Majesty's Government have laid down for their own guidance, is as applicable to the circumstances of Scotland as to those of England, we shall give it our support, and I hope, whatever happens, my noble friend behind me, will take the sense of the House on the Second Reading of the measure.

EARL ROSEBERY: My Lords, I daresay a good many of your Lordships have undergone a very sensible disappointment this afternoon. I came down to the House with a mind in an entirely receptive condition, anxious to hear the criticism of His Majesty's Government on their own Bill when it was presented by a private Member. I was anxious to know what it was that prevented the full bounty and affluence of beneficence which we are so frequently told is embodied in the English Bill from being extended to the barren regions of Scotland. Instead of this, we have been treated to something very widely different. Let me at once extend to my noble relative opposite my cordial sympathy in the extreme difficulty of the position in which he is placed. He spoke of the martyrdom which he and other Ministers underwent, and which I think they endure with tolerable complacency — a martyrdom which I as a Liberal Minister have undergone in my term, and which I never found of a character likely to terminate my existence. But I do know that the position is difficult when you have to get up from the Ministerial Bench and repudiate a Bill which you brought in yourselves last year for England, and which is producing such immeasurably beneficial results. My noble friend got out of his difficulty with the airy grace of a butterfly, but I may say of a butterfly with a pin through it. He attempted to soar over the difficulties which presented themselves, but he could not be unaware that there was perforating him at the moment the fatal embarrassment that the measure he was opposing was a measure of the Government of which he is a Member. He rode off on two considerations. He said there was a total want of courtesy in the action of my noble friend, in the first place to my noble and, if I may call him so, Macedonian friend, Lord Newton, who had wished to bring before your Lordships a question of peculiar delicacy and difficulty at 4·30, and not later, this afternoon. Whether the Government are pining to deliver themselves on that question at the earliest possible moment I will not pause to inquire, though I do not see any particular enthusiasm on the part of my noble friend the Under-Secretary. I know if I were Foreign Minister I should be glad rather of the delay than of any undue precipitation of that discussion.

Then there was a discourtesy to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, which everybody has repudiated, and which my noble friend has entirely failed to explain. I am quite certain that if he had previously explained in detail to my noble friend that there was a substantial want of courtesy in the course he was going to pursue, my noble friend would have taken it into consideration. Then we were told that there has been a total want of courtesy towards the House of Commons. That, of course, is a very grave matter, when the two Houses come into collision, and though we know that this House last session passed submissively and meekly some fifty or sixty measures that were sent up to it by the House of Commons, it would be a grave matter, even after that, if we should show any want of courtesy to the House which represents directly the people of this country.

But is there any want of courtesy towards the House of Commons in our bringing forward a Bill with regard to Scottish small holdings on this date? Is there any suspicion of want of courtesy on the part of the House of Commons towards this House in pursuing with precipitation a Bill which the House of Lords deliberately declined to entertain last session for good reasons given at the time? Why, at this moment there is a Bill being driven through the House of Commons with the precipitation with which a football is urged through the air by the lusty leg of a half-back, and with very much the same contemptuous action—a Bill which, urged towards the House of Lords, will come spinning through the lobby, we are told, before next week is over. I cannot conceive what want of courtesy there is in this House pursuing the same course as the other House is pursuing, or why, while the other House is discussing with considerable precipitation a measure which the majority in this House does not favour, we should not show an alternative policy.

My noble friend made great play, sportive play, with the question of urgency. What is this question of urgency? Would it have given the noble Lord who introduced this Bill an indigestion if he had deferred his speech for ten days—that is the argument addressed gravely and seriously by a responsible Minister to your Lordships. The question of urgency is an essential part of the whole matter. While the Bill that we declined to pass into law in its form of last year is being hurried through the House of Commons precipitately in precisely the same form, to be presented to your Lordships next week, it is, I consider, of vital importance that those who took the responsibility of criticising and attacking the measure last year should show what their alternative policy was at the earliest possible moment. Then my noble friend says there was discourtesy to the Government. Oh, heavens——

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I do not think I said that.

EARL ROSEBERY: I think when I develop my argument he will see that he did. I was proceeding to adjure the heavens, and to say—Oh, heavens, who are we to show discourtesy to the Government? Who could dream it, who could surmise it, who could think it, far less who could utter it—that we should show discourtesy to the Government? We show discourtesy to His Majesty's Government because a private Member introduces a Bill on a subject with which His Majesty's Government is dealing. I know very well, and I regret it from the bottom of my heart, that the initiative and the rights of private Members in both Houses as regards legislation have practically disappeared. But this is the first time I have authoritatively heard it stated by a Minister of the Crown that it is an absolute impertinence for a man who has occupied a responsible position in this House for more years, I daresay, than he cares to reckon, for a man who is respected throughout Scotland, both by the agricultural community and by those who know his hard work on the county council and other local bodies, to introduce a Bill dealing with a measure which is so vitally important to the interests of Scotland. I, on the contrary, applaud the effort of my noble friend. Whether the Government preserve their conspiracy of silence or not—and the conspiracy of silence on this subject is no new thing, because it was pretty closely preserved last year—I trust my noble friend will not hesitate to ask your Lordships to give this Bill a Second Reading to-night. I will tell him why I wish it.

I prefer his Bill to the proposal of Captain Sinclair for three or four distinct reasons. In the first place, it does not introduce that system of dual ownership which has been such an unmitigated curse to Ireland, and which there is no shadow of pretence for introducing into Scotland; in the next place, it does not introduce into Scotland that system of Land Courts and Land Commissionerships of which in Ireland there has been so gruesome an experience; in the third place, it does not attempt to inflict that gross disparagement on the Scottish county councils which Captain Sinclair has attempted to inflict by his Bill. That disparagement is as gratuitous as it is unjust. I appeal to the county councillors who sit on the Government bench whether they can deny the fact that that disparagement is ungrounded and superfluous. I should be prepared at the proper time to argue that the Scottish county councils — and I hope the English members of county councils will hear me in patience—are ahead of the English county councils in enterprise and in the work which they have done. That is an invidious topic to touch on, but at any rate I will contend to the death that they yield in no way—neither in work, capacity, nor intelligence—to the English county councils.

I have given three reasons; I will now give my fourth. It is that the Bill of my noble friend, or the principal provisions which it embodies, has not had the advantage possessed by Captain Sinclair's Bill of being condemned by every competent authority throughout Scotland. Those are the grounds on which I propose to give my support to Lord Camperdown's Bill. There is another Bill coming up on which I shall have something to say. Of that Bill it will be time enough to speak when it comes, but I do not think it will be necessary for your Lordships who expressed your opinion at length on that Bill last year to utter any further expressions of opinion upon it until you hear some tangible arguments urged against those which you then brought forward.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, this discussion, although it has not been a long one, has been a good humoured discussion, and I shall say nothing that will in any way jar. But I cannot help thinking that there has been a sense in the House during the whole discussion that what we have been engaged in is in substance a preliminary canter to the serious and businesslike discussion which must take place on the whole subject.

I was rather surprised that the noble Marquess seemed to attribute to me the substantial responsibility for the introduction of the measure now before the House, on the ground that it was an answer to a challenge which I had given. I did say last year that I should very much like to know what the alternative to the proposals of His Majesty's Government was, and I do not think that my noble friend, Lord Crewe, or anyone else, has complained in the least that that alternative has taken the shape of this Bill and the Bill brought forward by Lord Lovat. On the contrary, we are very glad to see these Bills, and we shall have something to say in regard to their principles, which we shall compare with the principles contained in our own Bill, when the proper times comes. We do not complain of these Bills being brought forward. The noble Earl, Lord Rosebery, was under a misapprehension if he thought that we, in the least, attempted to complain on that account.

The question is one of time. I think that an unfortunate time has been selected by the noble Earl for bringing forward his Bill. I wish the question of small holdings in Scotland to be practically dealt with as a matter of business, and not as a matter of mutual, I will not say recrimination, for there has been none, but mutual criticism. I want to have it dealt with as a matter of business, and I am glad to observe that your Lordships also desire that the subject should be dealt with in this House in a business like way. The question of land tenure, always a most intricate and difficult one, is complicated in the present case by the existence of the crofter system and the analogy of the English Act of last year. Many questions arise out of it—the position of county councils, dual ownership, and others. Everyone who has studied this subject will admit that it must have close and careful consideration. Are we to have that kind of discussion on two Bills, in the same Session, or only upon one? The House would not deal with the whole subject more than once, and it is surely reasonable that the Government should prefer that the discussion should take place upon their own Bill.

We were the original authors of proposals dealing with the subject, both this year and last year. I make no complaint of it, but since 1892 none of your Lordships have proposed a measure of this kind to Parliament. We did propose a Bill last year but it was found impossible, through want of time, to proceed with it, and when we dropped it the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition expressed regret that it was dropped, evidently anticipating its re-introduction this year. Knowing that next week we propose to proceed with our measure in this House, the noble Earl has thought fit to bring in his Bill, and I think it is reasonable that we should prefer to take the discussion on the Government Bill.

Then the noble Earl's Bill is substantially the same as the Bill which was thrown out in the House of Commons a few days ago. This Bill was introduced in the House of Commons, and the Conservative Party, quite within their right, claimed to have an immediate division. It was not the Government who forced a division; the House of Commons, as a whole, consented, and after a debate which lasted twenty or twenty-five minutes—and I am afraid that does not look as if the opinion of Scottish Members in the House of Commons was that which the noble Earl thinks is the opinion of Scotland—it was thrown out by something like four to one. The Bill, therefore, could not, in conformity with the procedure of the other House, be again considered this year. The noble Earl's Bill, if sent down to the House of Commons, could not be even introduced this year, because it is substantially the same as the one which has been already rejected. That is a very good reason for taking the discussion on this subject on the Bill of the Government. I think it is a matter of good taste, if I may be permitted to say so, and of good feeling towards the authors of the Bill, and it is a matter of necessity if you want any legislation to be passed, that you should wait until that Bill comes up from another place.

I am sorely tempted to enter upon some of the questions which have been adumbrated rather than discussed. I should like to point out some considerations with regard, for example, to the question of dual ownership, but, though sorely tempted, I will refrain from doing so. In the course of a week, or certainly not more than ten days, when I am again burdened with the arduous duty of bringing in the Government Bill, I hope to enter fully upon the whole subject. Then will be the right time for a discussion, and I have limited my observations on the present occasion to the question of expediency and business considerations, hoping that at the proper time we shall have a business-like discussion on the subject matter of the Bill.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, I can truly say I did not come down to the House this evening with any intention of making a speech, because I understood from a communication yesterday that noble Lords opposite were going to decline to take part in the discussion of this Bill. I should not have risen now if it had not been for some observations made by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. I cordially agree with him that this has been a good-humoured discussion, and I have no intention of introducing any element of discord. But when the noble and learned Lord said that the Government make no complaint of the introduction of this Bill, I must say I listened to that remark with some surprise, because I sat through the speech of the noble Earl the Lord President of the Council, and took that speech as one long drawn-out complaint of the introduction of the Bill, and of the putting of it down for Second Reading to-day.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I beg the noble Lord's pardon. The second half of his statement is perfectly correct. I complained of its being put down to-day, but I in no way complained of its being introduced.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: What is the use of introducing a Bill if it is not to be discussed? If the Bill were not proceeded with, would not the noble Lord and his friends have gone about the country saying the Bill was never really intended; that it was put down for show, and that there was never any intention of persevering with it? I can assure the House that my noble friend, Lord Camperdown, intends this Bill as a serious contribution to legislation. It is the embodiment of what we forecasted last year. As the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition said, we were challenged to put down, in the actual form of a Bill, the exact proposals we suggested. We have had the autumn to think it over, we have watched the agitation which noble Lords opposite tried to raise throughout Scotland in regard to their Bill, and all I can tell them is that, whatever they may think of it, the agitation has fallen as flat as it is possible for any agitation to fall. I venture to say that if there has been any change of opinion it has been rather in favour of this House than against it. Those who are interested in this question are more convinced than they were before that we mean what we say.

The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack says we can have a business-like discussion next week. But I would point out that my noble friend's Bill and the Government Bill are very different, and it would be out of order to discuss the Bill which is on the Paper for Second Reading to-day on the proposals of the Government next week. I must say I think it is extremely reasonable that we should have endeavoured to find out what are the objections of the Government to our proposals, and this we could only do by asking them to take part in this discussion. I join in the appeal to the noble Earl in charge of this Bill not to be dissuaded from going on with the Second Reading to day. It may be a wise thing to postpone the further stage of it until we have had the discussion on the Second Reading of the Government Bill. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack says it is not practical business to send this Bill or anything just like it down to the other House in the circumstances of what passed there forty-eight hours ago. I can assure the House that the two Bills were prepared independently for different committees. The noble Earl has not collaborated with those who prepared that Bill, and, though the two measures are on general lines similar, I think there is sufficient difference between them to make it quite reasonable to send down this Bill, when discussed and amended, to the other House of Parliament.

We are to have, as I understand, a business-like discussion next week. The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has pledged himself to go fully into the considerations which have induced the Government to propose their measure. May I venture to make an appeal to him? I am not going to discuss the question, but I appeal to him to tell us that which we have never been told—namely, what are the reasons for the introduction of a Land Court into Scotland, and what is the evidence upon which the Government have arrived at the conclusion that the people of Scotland desire it, and the circumstances of agriculture call for it. There is no basis for it in the crofter legislation. The crofter legislation of 1886 proceeded on the Report of a Commission which made a most careful inquiry into the circumstances of those districts, and they reported—in almost every page of their Report you will find it—that the grievances of the crofter were that they had a certain hereditary tenure, that many of them and their predecessors in title had done the improvements. Those are the circumstances that differentiate the crofter district from the other districts of Scotland, and the appeal I make to the noble and learned Lord is to tell us who has asked for this legislation, and upon what inquiry and what evidence it has been evolved. Can he say that there is any real necessity and demand for this revolution in land tenure in Scotland?

It has been said before to-night that the whole of the expert agricultural opinion in Scotland is against the Government's proposal. I believe that to be so. I do not myself know a single man of any standing engaged in agriculture who has written or spoken in favour of the Government Bill. I suppose they would not take the evidence of a landlord or a factor, but, quite irrespective of party, I do not believe there is a man who is known in the agricultural world in Scotland who has put a reasoned opinion forward in favour of the Government Bill as it stands, and I think we are entitled to ask for the evidence upon which it is founded and which has convinced some Members, at any rate, of the Government that this revolution is demanded.

I pledge myself, and I have no doubt others will do the same, that if anything which can be called evidence or argument in favour of the particular provisions in the Government Bill is brought forward, we will give it dispassionate consideration. But hitherto there has never been a case in which the advocacy of a particular proposal has been left so entirely to one or two members of the Government; and, anxious as I am to see this matter settled, I venture to say it will require a great deal more than has yet been brought forward to convince us that the circumstances of Scotland or the interests of agriculture require the revolution suggested in the Government Bill. I sincerely hope that the noble Lord below the gangway will proceed with the Second Reading of his Bill to-day.

LORD COURTNEY OF PENWITH: My Lords, I do not rise for the purpose of speaking on the merits or demerits of the Bill now before your Lordships, still less do I wish to speak on the Bill which may be expected in a few days from another place. But I should like to put before your Lordships, very briefly, some considerations which lead me to think that the course you are now invited to enter upon is not conducive to the true dignity and honour of your Lordships' House. Although I am one of the latest comers to this Assembly, I hope I am as jealous of its honour and dignity as any of its Members.

My Lords, what is the situation? In the Speech from the Throne we were graciously informed that a Bill would be brought in dealing with the land laws of Scotland, and a Bill has been brought in by His Majesty's Government in another place. We are not entitled to know, and it does not, I think, become us to know, in what form that Bill will appear before us. It may be absolutely the same as the Bill that came up last year, but, even if it comes up without the change of a syllable, it will come before us for discussion, for which we shall have ample time. The point is whether we should discuss the question of land law reform in Scotland on the Bill introduced by the noble Earl opposite, or whether, as a matter of courtesy, we should wait till the Bill comes up from another place.

No one, I think, really complains that the noble Earl has brought in an independent Bill on this subject. It is quite right that any Member of your Lordships' House, having a desire to submit a scheme of land law reform in Scotland, should submit it to your Lordships; but the question is whether it should not, as a matter of courtesy between the two Houses, wait until the introduction of the Bill now being discussed elsewhere, and whether the two Bills should not be brought before us together. Then is the proper time to enter into a consideration of the merits or demerits of either or both. I have known, in another place, of two Bills being brought in dealing with the same subject and being referred to a Select Committee, one Bill issuing out of the consideration of the two. I do not mean to suggest that that would be a proper procedure here, but it would be at least a becoming procedure.

To vote on the merits of this Bill now would be to take an action that would not be conducive to the good reputation of your Lordships' House. It would be premature to-day to give a decision on the issue raised, and I therefore ask your Lordships to adjourn the debate, and next week the two Bills could be placed on the Paper together and the whole subject considered in its entirety. It would be grossly improper to-day to discuss the contents of a Bill which is not before us, and I therefore move that the debate be now adjourned.

Moved, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Lord Courtney of Penwith.*)

On Question, their Lordships divided:—Contents, 32; Not-contents, 137.

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Resolved in the negative: Then the original Motion agreed to: Bill read 2^a accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

MACEDONIA.

LORD NEWTON rose to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he was prepared to make a statement with regard to the progress of reforms in Macedonia. The noble Lord said: My Lords, in spite of the commiseration which has been so kindly expressed as regards myself by the Leader of the House, and by his noble relative on the Cross Benches, I can assure your Lordships that I have no intention of delaying you at any length, my sole object being to obtain a full statement of policy from His Majesty's Government. I cannot help, however, remarking upon the changed character of the language which is used in reference to this well-worn subject. On previous occasions, when private individuals like myself have complained that things were not going on in a satisfactory manner in Macedonia, we have always been told that we were inclined to exaggerate the evils of the situation, and that things were really not so bad as we had endeavoured to make out. But I notice a distinct change in the language used this year. The subject had a prominent paragraph in the Speech from the Throne, in which it was stated—

> "The condition of the Christian and Mussulman population in the Macedonian vilayets shows no improvement; the bands of different nationalities continue to pursue a campaign of violence, and the situation gives serious cause for anxiety."

That is an assertion which I should think nobody would be prepared to dispute. The next paragraph adds that the Powers were agreed upon the presentation of a scheme for judiciary reform, and that His Majesty's Government had made, or were about to make, proposals to the Sultan, and also to the Great Powers, for the purpose of dealing effectively with the principal causes of disturbance. It is undoubted that the situation as regards the condition of the population has not changed, but remains precisely what it was five or six years ago. Hilmi Pacha, who appears to be the Turkish equivalent for Mr. Birrell, assures everybody that everything is going on in a fairly satisfactory manner, and that if outrages do occur, they must undoubtedly be perpetrated by those who make them the cause of complaint.

We are aware that a collective Note with regard to reform in the Judiciary has been presented, but with what effect we are at present unaware; and we now know that the proposal alluded to in His Majesty's Speech was the proposal that the so-called reformed *gendarmerie* should be increased to such an extent as to be able to cope with the anarchical conditions which prevail. I venture to express the opinion that, so far as one can judge, this was a perfectly reasonable proposal, although it has been somewhat curtly, if not discourteously, referred to by Baron von Aehrenthal as a proposal of an impracticable nature. As a matter of fact, the so-called reformed *gendarmerie* have never been able to perform the proper functions of a *gendarmerie*, which I take to be the protection of harmless populations from malefactors. They have been utilised, if I am not mistaken, chiefly as tax-collectors and as Government messengers, and, owing to various causes, they are not nearly so numerous as was at one time hoped would be the case. I believe they number, roughly, something like 4,000—a totally inadequate force to cope with the sort of work they are expected to do.

As I understand it, the proposal of His Majesty's Government was that the *gendarmerie* should be largely increased in numbers, and the Turkish Army proportionately reduced. If this were to be carried into effect, it is obvious that the reformed *gendarmerie* would have to be very largely increased in numbers, because, unless I am very much mistaken, it takes no less than 20,000 regular troops to protect such few railways as exist in that country; and I think it is only fair to point out that if a reduction is insisted upon in the Turkish force, a corresponding reduction should be required in the case of the neighbouring countries from whom the Turks, possibly not without reason, consider they have something to fear. It is somewhat singular, and, I might add, somewhat ominous, that this proposal of His Majesty's Government does not appear to have received any support from any one of the Powers; and my noble friend Lord Curzon will probably remark with interest that even the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention does not seem to have elicited support for this somewhat modest proposal even from the Russian Government. I think the obvious moral which every one must draw from this is that no Power really feels any genuine sentimental interest with regard to this particular question. As a matter of fact, I believe that, so far as politics are concerned, we are the only sentimental nation in existence. Other nations look upon this question not solely from humanitarian or from sentimental interests, but from the point of view of their own material and political interest.

But what is much more important than the failure of His Majesty's Government is the highly important change, an event of considerable international importance, which has taken place in consequence of the recent action of the Austrian Government. I do not want to speak at length on this point, but one thing is perfectly plain, that this development of Austrian policy has brought the Austro-Russian understanding to an end. The Austrians and the Russians, in this case correctly termed interested Powers, were delegated by Europe in this matter, but this partnership has now come to an end. With regard to the partnership of these Powers, I confess I never was one of those who believed in their altruistic intentions; and I am bound to say I never found anybody, either here or elsewhere, who ever did believe in their disinterested intentions. The only exceptions to the contrary are those noble Lords and Members of Parliament who have to speak for the Foreign Office and some members of the Diplomatic Corps in Constantinople. Whether it was a real or a sham partnership, at all events it lasted ostensibly so long as both parties agreed to do nothing. When, however, one of the parties suddenly discloses the fact that it has been looking after its own interests in addition to what it professed to do, then not only does the partnership suddenly come to an end, but the whole European Concert shows ominous danger of collapsing.

I submit that it is not the slightest use for Baron von Aehrenthal or anybody else to state that the action of the Austrian Government in obtaining this railway concession from the Porte has nothing to do with the so-called reform scheme; and as for the assertion that this is a purely economic and commercial development on the part of Austria, I think that assertion is sufficiently met by the fact that no sooner is it known that the Austrian Government has applied for a railway concession which will put them in direct communication with the Ægean, than we learn that the Russian Government, no doubt with a view to economic and commercial development, is about to press for a concession for a line stretching from the Lower Danube to the Adriatic. That is a sufficient reply to the Austrian assertion that this is purely a matter of economic and commercial concern.

I think there are two inferences which, whatever assertions may be made to the contrary, will be drawn by the world in general as a result of the action of Austria. The first inference is that the Austrian action has had certainly the approval, and possibly the encouragement of the German Government; the second inference—a much more unfriendly inference—which is equally certain to be drawn, is that this concession has not been obtained from the Turkish Government for nothing; and I think the obvious deduction which we shall draw from the success of this action is that the Austrian Government, in return for what they have obtained, have undertaken not to put any further inconvenient pressure upon the Turkish Government. It is obvious that the result of Austria's action must be permanently to weaken the force of what is called the European Concert.

Everything that has been obtained with regard to the so-called Macedonian scheme of reforms has been obtained by the Powers jointly, although it is only fair to say that German support all along has been of a purely platonic character. What is the position now? It is perfectly clear that although these collective Notes pressing for various reforms may be signed by all the Powers, yet the signature of one Power, possibly of two Powers, is not likely to carry much weight; and I cannot forbear from congratulating the Turkish Government, or the Sultan, or the Porte, or whoever may be responsible for it, upon the remarkable success which has been attained at so small a cost. At the mere trifling cost of giving a concession to survey a railway—a thing which probably was done before—the force of the European Concert has been permanently weakened, and it is quite obvious that a wedge has been driven into it which may reduce its power to a considerable extent.

I venture to sum up these observations by stating what I do not think is an exaggeration, that the result of this action is as follows—the so called Murzsteg programme is practically dead, the European Concert shows signs of something approaching collapse, and, unless I am mistaken—I sincerely trust I am—it looks as if we were about to be left in that position of splendid isolation which no longer commends itself to anybody in this country. In any case, I venture to think that the turn which events have taken is a justification for my asking for information on the subject from the Government, and I hope my noble friend will be able to give the House a complete statement of policy. At the same time I beg to move for Papers.

Moved, "That a humble Address be presented to His Majesty for Papers with regard to the progress of reforms in Macedonia."—(*Lord Newton.*)

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord FITZMAURICE): My Lords, owing to the discussion which has taken place in reference to what I may call the disturbances in Scotland, this discussion upon the far more thorny question of the condition of Macedonia has been postponed to an hour which I feel has placed my noble friend at some disadvantage. In regard to myself, I have to ask the indulgence of the House. I am in the position of having the choice of one of two courses. I might shelter myself under the statement that in all probability will be made in another place, containing a very complete account of the present position of affairs in Macedonia. But, if I were to do that, I think I should be pursuing a course hardly respectful to your Lordships' House, for discussions on foreign affairs have always been regarded, even by the severest critics of this House, as a legitimate and proper sphere for the intervention of your Lordships. So I shall make a statement of a reasonably full description, because I think anything else would at this time be liable to misunderstanding, and, perhaps, be misleading.

I wish that on this occasion I could say something similar to what I said last night in my opening remarks upon the difficult question we then discussed. Last night I was able, with full conviction, to say that, discouraging as many things in the condition of the Congo problem still were, at least we could point to some progress since even the last time when I spoke upon the subject. But I regret that to-night I am not able to give your Lordships any cheerful news in regard to the condition of Macedonia. There are certain broad and general facts to which my noble friend has alluded, and which are not only within his knowledge but within the knowledge of every Member of the House and of the public at large, which indicate that a very critical stage of the question has now been reached, both in regard locally to Macedonia and diplomatically to the Concert of the Powers. That being so, and in order not to take more of the time of your Lordships than I can help, I desire this evening to avoid the mere details of the question as much as possible, and to put before your Lordships certain broad considerations bearing upon the history and the present position of this question as a whole.

I do not desire to travel too far back. I am content to remind your Lordships that after many attempts had been made under the terms of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin to relieve the population of Macedonia, in one of which no less, I am sorry to say, than twenty-seven years ago I was myself concerned, the state of things in Macedonia, owing to the failure of the Powers to induce the Porte to carry out the terms of Article 23, had again become so bad and so great a scandal that all the Powers, in greater or less degree, came to the conclusion, at the time when my noble friend opposite was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that some attempt must be made to introduce improvement into these regions, the condition of which was becoming a danger and a scandal to Europe. The proposals which at that time my noble friend formulated, I think I may say with general consent, and which were adopted as the policy of this country, were, broadly speaking, these. I go back to 29th September, 1903. My noble friend then put it on record that it was the opinion of the Government of this country that the true remedy for the troubles in Macedonia was the appointment of a Governor-General, no doubt by the Porte, but with the approval of the Powers, and not removable except with their consent. It is no doubt perfectly true that a suggestion of that kind can be traced to an earlier date, but I take 29th September, 1903, as the date when the suggestion hardened into a despatch and was put into the forefront of this great controversy.

There were other and smaller, though no doubt important, reforms also put forward by my noble friend. All these suggestions are to be found in the succession of despatches with which the name of my noble friend is identified. They include proposals for the establishment of a Financial Commission enjoying a certain measure of independence of the Porte, and for the establishment of courts of justice organised on a proper basis and possessing that essential element, a secure tenure for the Judges. In addition, there were proposals constantly put forward by my noble friend for the organisation of a proper *gendarmerie* outside the control of the Government at Constantinople. These proposals were the subject of discussion among the Powers from the end of 1903 to the end of 1905. The Austrian and the Russian Governments, by the well-known arrangement between them, claimed to be specially interested in the introduction of these reforms, or some of them, into Macedonia, and it was the policy—I think the wise policy—of the late Government of this country, while not completely admitting the right of these two Powers to have an absolute prerogative voice in the matter, to go as far as possible in inviting them to take the lead, as undoubtedly they were more concerned, on account of their geographical position, in the good administration of Macedonia than this country could be said to be.

There was, as usual, a considerable amount of difference of opinion among the Powers, but the ultimate result was that the Concert of Europe, which was, on the whole, successfully maintained, succeeded, after having to use a very considerable amount not only of moral pressure, but of pressure in the form of a naval demonstration, in inducing a reluctant Sultan and an unwilling Porte to consent to the establishment at Salonika of a Financial Commission at the end of 1905, with financial powers set out and defined in the document known as the *règlement*. It is no doubt perfectly true, and we must not forget it, that jettison had had to be made, before agreement could be maintained and made effective, of much of what the late Government and the people of this country desired to see. The question of the appointment of an independent Governor-General never reached a very prominent place in these discussions; the judicial reform had unwillingly to be abandoned for the moment; and as to the establishment of a *gendarmerie* and the reduction of Turkish troops—two things which more or less, as my noble friend has truly suggested, hung together—they were only made effective up to a certain point. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the *règlement*, or organic Statute, of 1905, which came into force almost at the same time that there was a change of Government here, did show a very marked stage in advance.

It was the duty of the Government which succeeded that in which my noble friend was Foreign Secretary to do everything in its power to make these limited reforms effective. Here I must say that I am inclined to think that sometimes, not on the part of noble Lords opposite, but of some of my own political friends, there has been a little want of appreciation of the position of the present Government when we came into power. I have sometimes heard language used and seen suggestions made by letter as if it would have been quite a natural course, indeed a right and obvious course, for Sir Edward Grey, directly he arrived at the Foreign Office, to have treated the organic Statute of 1905, as an insufficient and unsatisfactory document, and immediately to have reopened all those questions which had been discussed during 1903–5. Your Lordships are perfectly cognisant of the fact that if Sir Edward Grey had done anything of the kind he would only have thrown away the harvest which the patient diplomacy of my noble friend opposite had reaped, without gaining anything additional himself.

It was our first duty to get everything possible out of the organic Statute of 1905, and the Foreign Office did everything it could in the period immediately following to give reality to the reforms. We did succeed, as I explained to your Lordships a year ago, in obtaining by our own patient diplomacy one very valuable thing, for we made it a condition of the 3 per cent. increase of the Customs that a large proportion of the increased revenue should be paid over to strengthen the Treasury of the Finance Commission at Salonika, and enable them to introduce that sound finance without which proper government is impossible. But we did not succeed, as time progressed, in introducing the improvement in the condition of things which we desired in Macedonia. I am not here this evening to try and apportion blame. Suffice it to say that confusion continued in that country, the bands continued to cut one another's throats and harry villages, and the Turkish Government, notwithstanding the enormous force it continued to maintain in the three vilayets in Macedonia, seemed unable to cope, in an adequate manner, with the difficulties I have described. It is no doubt perfectly true, as Sir Edward Grey has said, that some improvement could be traced some little time ago, but you had no sooner made an admission of that kind than almost immediately, by some strange fatality, you were confronted with fresh outbreaks and fresh horrors, which made you feel that in reality you had not got to the root of the evil.

That being so, the Powers had no choice but again to consider what reforms could be introduced. I think I may say that all the Powers were agreed upon the desirability of introducing judicial reforms by a better organisation of the Courts and by a better choice of Judges; and the two Powers which signed the Mürzsteg Agreement—Austria and Russia—took a special interest in putting forward a scheme bearing on that branch of the subject. On the other hand, while readily co-operating in the attempt to carry out the judicial reforms, we attached, perhaps, even greater importance to the effective reorganisation of the *gendarmerie*, because what has come out clearly in these long discussions has been that the root evil in Macedonia is that the absence of real authority vested in the *gendarmerie*, and the unwilling co-operation of the Turkish authorities, have prevented the *gendarmerie* doing anything effectual. We therefore laid stress on the reduction of the large Turkish Army in Macedonia, and the substitution of a better and rather larger *gendarmerie* force.

A third question simultaneously arose. The powers of the Civil Agents and of the delegates of the Powers sitting in the Financial Commission, which came into existence in December, 1905, are about to terminate, and the Powers agreed to present a Note to the Porte calling upon the Porte to consent to a further extension of their powers. No sooner was it known that this was contemplated than the Porte made the characteristic and dilatory proposal that it should take back into its own pay and under its own control the officers who in reality represent the Powers on the Financial Commission. I do not think it is necessary for me to tell your Lordships that the Powers unanimously declined to listen to that subtle suggestion, and that, in consequence, no agreement has yet been arrived at on the subject. In regard to the question of judicial reforms there were long and elaborate discussions between the Powers, and practical unanimity was obtained as to the terms of a Note to be presented. The wording of it, of course, had to be carefully considered, and it took a considerable time.

But besides the question of actual agreement in the preparation of the Note there came the question at the last moment as to what might follow supposing such a Note were presented; and here I regret to say there was not that unanimity among the Powers which I wish I could have announced to your Lordships. Some of the Powers were of opinion that the Porte was certain to refuse the Note, and that unless the Powers were agreed upon some strong course to be adopted almost immediately upon the refusal of the Note by the Porte it might be better on the whole to adjourn its presentation. We have been ready for a long time to sign the Note and join in presenting it if the other Powers would do so, but some hesitation arose among them owing to the fact that judicial reform, while certain to meet with resistance from the Porte, is not in itself, perhaps, the remedy most urgently required to stop the outrages and clear the country of the bands, a view with which, as I have said, we have some sympathy ourselves.

I now come to what happened in regard to the *gendarmerie*. This, as I have already told your Lordships, is the branch of the question to which this country, through its representatives, has attached the greatest importance. We know that a well-organised Judiciary, if given time and properly supported, would do much to introduce law and order; but we believe that a well-organised *gendarmerie*, under sufficient officers and with sufficient powers, could in reality restore order in Macedonia in a very few weeks. Regarding this question as practical men, we were very anxious to secure the consent of the other Powers to certain proposals in regard to the *gendarmerie* which we desired to embody in the Note, but I regret to tell your Lordships that we were not able to obtain the consent of the Powers.

I think your Lordships will agree that the logical consequence of the hesitation of some of the Powers on this question is that some other effective proposal should be forthcoming from them without delay. It is not enough to decline the proposals which have been put forward with our full consent, because the situation in Macedonia is urgent and does not admit of delay. Therefore we must hope that the Powers of Europe, who in some degree are responsible for the difficulty which has arisen, will see that upon them now lies a special responsibility to put forward some plan better than that to which they have not been able to consent.

LORD NEWTON: Why not?

*LORD FITZMAURICE: I will come to that. Some of the Powers thought that judicial reform was sufficient. Some of the Powers thought that the proposals in regard to the *gendarmerie* were inopportune, unless we could be quite certain of securing the consent of all the other Powers, and they apprehended we should not. Therefore, for one reason or another, the Powers to whom we appealed were unable to give their consent. The position in which we now stand is this. We are engaged in a controversy with the Porte upon the question of the extension of the powers of the Civil Agents and the delegates on the Financial Commission. With regard to the reorganisation of the *gendarmerie*, we are not in agreement with the other Powers; and in regard to judicial reform, although we are in complete theoretical agreement with them, we have not yet been able to persuade the Powers that the moment has come when the Note to which I have alluded to can, with advantage, be presented.

Your Lordships will, I think, see that the position is a delicate one, and that it, above all things, requires on the part of those who represent the Foreign Office careful action and careful language. But, my Lords, although the statement I have put before you may be in some respects disappointing to those who had hoped for an early restoration of order in Macedonia, there are, I am glad to say, certain elements in the situation of an encouraging character. To me by far the most encouraging circumstance is that there is no longer a tendency in any Foreign Office in Europe, so far as I know, to minimise the gravity of the condition of things in Macedonia. I remember that in one of our previous debates the noble Lord who introduced it commented upon the language of a Foreign Minister in another country, who rather questioned the gravity of the situation. I think no one who read the speech made the other day by the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary would, for a single moment, say that he had attempted to underrate or minimise the evils of the situation.

A few years ago those who represent this country were in the position of having to argue with those who, to a certain extent, suggested that this was not a very serious situation, not more serious than it had been for a long time, and who asked why not leave it alone. This country has never taken that view. We have always been conscious of the duties incumbent upon Europe, under Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. That treaty replaced these countries under the rule of the Porte, but at the same time, it gave them, under Article 23, the right of having reformed institutions. That Article, like the whole of the treaty, is binding on Europe, and this country has never forgotten the obligations incumbent upon it, difficult as those obligations have been to carry out.

It has been frequently said during the last few days that the Concert of Europe is at an end. Severe language has been used about Austria-Hungary in connection with the grant to it by Turkey of a right to survey a railway to Mitrovitza, the rail-head of the Salonika Railway. We, as a great commercial nation, have, I need hardly say, viewed railways in the Balkan Peninsula, not only without apprehension, but with benevolent neutrality, because the opening up of communications is one of the surest means of checking barbarism. Therefore, I trust it will be clearly understood that we do not in any way identify ourselves with the rather unjustly severe language, which has been used about Austria-Hungary, more especially in view of the fact that under Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, Austria-Hungary has the right to occupy the sanjak of Novi Bazar, and has not only exercised that right hitherto to its full limits for political and domestic reasons of which she was the best judge. In addition, under that Article Austria-Hungary has a special right to keep garrisons and have military and commercial roads in that sanjak, and it would be a narrow and ungenerous interpretation of those rights if, merely because roads were mentioned and not a railway, we questioned the right of Austria in the matter.

On the other hand, it is always unfortunate when the Great Powers are negotiating with a common adversary—and I am obliged to use that term, though reluctantly, in regard to the Ottoman Porte—if one of them gives that adversary the impression that something has occurred to separate one Power from the other; and there can be no doubt, although I absolutely and entirely acquit the Government of Austria-Hungary of any such intention, that in this case the Porte has jumped to the conclusion that there is some serious dissension between that Power and the other signatories of the treaty. That, however, is not the case; it is an exaggeration to imagine that the Concert of Europe has been permanently broken, either by the failure of agreement on the points I have mentioned, or by the application of Austria-Hungary to do that which it has an undoubted right to do.

I shall probably be asked what line the Government intend to recommend the country to adopt in the troubled condition of affairs. The sketch which I have given your Lordships this evening set out with a statement of the views held by my noble friend, the late Foreign Secretary, in regard to the position as a whole, as stated in the despatches of the years 1902–4. We, as a Power, have never once departed from what I may call the high-water mark of my noble friend's proposals. We have had to do our loyal best to carry out the reduced scheme of reform which we found in existence, and which was all that my noble friend had been able to obtain from the Concert of Europe before he left office. We have also done what we could since then to extend the financial reforms, and to secure their effective financial working, but even in that respect, as I have shown, we have had great difficulties with the Porte. Although my noble friend obtained, and we subsequently obtained still larger, financial guarantees from the Porte for the punctual payment of the sums which it had undertaken to pay to balance the Budget of the Commission sitting at Salonica, the dilatory and unbusinesslike habits of the Porte have still pursued it, and those payments are constantly in arrear. The result is that, in addition to the disorder arising from the bands in Macedonia as a whole, there is the constant financial disorder arising from the irregularity of the payments by the Porte. In one year there was a deficit of nearly 240,000 Turkish pounds; in another year, a further deficit of over 100,000 Turkish pounds; and a total deficit for the period up to which the last account was made up of 342,742 Turkish pounds. That deficit was entirely in respect of payments due by the Porte during the period prior to the increase of the Customs, and large sums are still owing on that account, but I regret to have to add that since then also there have been delays in payment.

The Porte seems to take a malicious pleasure in increasing its own difficulties by weakening its authority by unnecessary expeditions. Enormous sums of money, which could have balanced the Macedonian Budget hundreds of times over, have been wasted by being poured into the horrible war which is now going on in Arabia. The Turkish Government have in cold blood re-opened that dangerous question, and there is something also like a condition of warfare on the borders of Persia and Asia Minor and the gravest apprehensions were entertained a fortnight ago on the subject, nor is the condition of Armenia improved. Therefore the condition of the Ottoman Empire as a whole is one which causes us, taken in connection with Macedonia, the gravest anxiety, and for that reason we deem it all the more necessary to ask ourselves whether the time has not come when, in the interests of the Porte itself, in order to lighten its load and enable it to set to work, if it can, upon putting its house as a whole in order, it is desirable that some stronger measures should be taken in Macedonia.

Therefore, it is that we now consider it our duty to look the situation as a whole in the face, and, while not embarking upon any hurried plan or putting forward any definite proposals at this moment, to ask ourselves also whether the time has not come when we must fall back upon the largest of all the proposals put forward by my noble friend at the date from which I have started my historical sketch; that is to say, whether the time has not come when an independent Governor, like the Governor of the Lebanon, should not be appointed, irremovable except at the will of the Powers, with a proper and fixed salary—a man enjoying the confidence of the country, as a whole, and not necessarily a Christian. I wish rather to insist upon that point. In Macedonia, where Christian nationalities are unfortunately so largely occupied in making war on each other, it is perfectly possible that a fair-minded and judicious subject of the Porte, who may not be a Christian, may in some respects be even more eligible than a Christian. Such men have existed, and I have no doubt do exist, though I think there are fewer of them now in the service of the Porte than formerly. I am sure that if my noble friend the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, were here, he would tell you that the late Reouf Pasha, who commanded the Turkish Army in the late war to the South of the Balkans, was a man of the stamp I mean. But you must also be careful not to exclude the type of man who at Constantinople is sometimes guilty of what our ancestors called "occasional conformity." I mean the Christian who has taken service with the Porte, and for reasons of his own sometimes conforms outwardly to Mahomedanism. There have been men of great ability in the Turkish service of this type, and you do not want to exclude them.

We, at the Foreign Office, regard the appointment of a Governor as being really at the root of the matter. Owing to our failure to persuade the other Powers of the desirability of some of our own suggestions, we are for the moment assuming what I may perhaps call an observant attitude; but owing to the grave condition of the country it is certain that that cannot last for long. What we earnestly hope is that the Powers will feel that as we have not been successful in inducing them to adopt, in regard to the *gendarmerie*, our proposals, which are, in our opinion, the essential and prime necessity of the hour, and as we have not been able to agree amongst ourselves as to the desirability of presenting this Note, although we have agreed upon the text, in these circumstances they will feel that the responsibility for the next step lies with them. In due course, and that before long, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will convey suggestions which he thinks the necessity of the case requires.

Lord Fitzmaurice.

I have indicated to your Lordships what it is that we think is at the root of the matter, and as we have simply adopted a proposal already endorsed by my noble friend opposite, I feel that both sides of the House stand on common ground in this matter. We are all engaged in trying to steer our way amidst the rocks of this difficult question—as difficult and intricate as that of the Congo—and I cannot help hoping that the feeling will be general in Europe that the hour has come when this condition of things should be terminated, and when Macedonia should be liberated from the intolerable confusion, trouble, and oppression from which it has suffered so long. Let Europe try to realise what this country is—the seat of the greatest Greek kingdom of old; the fairest province of the later Roman Empire; a country endowed by nature with every advantage of climate, position, and soil; a country which would, under solid and safe government, probably quickly again blossom into that position of prosperity it formerly occupied. But a huge emigration is going on. The people are flying from the land. The harbour of Salonika is silting up, and men are kidnapped in their own houses and carried off by brigands. That, my Lords, is what we desire to urge upon the conscience of the civilised world. We feel that we have done all we can to bring these matters to an end and that every hour and every day which passes over these admitted but unreformed abuses is in itself a terrible commentary on the boasted civilisation of modern Europe.

*The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the statement we have heard from my noble friend is one not only of great interest but of great importance, and I certainly am not disposed on the spur of the moment to offer comment or criticism to any great extent upon what my noble friend has said. I do not at all complain of the *resume* he gave of the policy pursued by the late Government. We always admitted that this country shared with other Powers their responsibility for the lamentable condition into which these Macedonian vilayets have fallen. I lay stress on the word "shared" because I have often heard it urged that upon this country there lay a peculiar burden of responsibility unlike that upon any other country. Now, in my view, this country has done its duty, not only as fully, but much more fully, than the other Powers signatories to the Treaty of Berlin; and I shall always venture to protest against the doctrine that a double dose of responsibility lies at our door. Again, we always urged, and I think rightly, that we should strain every effort in order to preserve the Concert of Europe; that we should—to use a familiar expression—endeavour to squeeze all we could out of that Concert, but that it would be better to take a good deal less than we desired rather than to press for full satisfaction of our demands and thereby imperil the continuation of the Concert. Of course, the result of that policy—we must admit it fully—was that we never got nearly as much as we wanted; but that was inevitable so long as our endeavour was to lead the other Powers rather than to impose our own view. Our high watermark, to use the expression of my noble friend, was to be found in the proposal made by the late Government in 1903—namely, the proposal that we should endeavour to induce the Powers to consent to the appointment of an independent and irremovable Governor, on what is commonly known as the Lebanon principle. That proposal received little, or, indeed, no encouragement at the time, and we had to be content with pressing reforms of other kinds, judicial and financial, and reforms in reference to the *gendarmerie*. I think it is somewhat too readily assumed that these reforms were scarcely worth the paper they were written on. I shall always continue to believe that, disappointing as the Mürzsteg scheme was, something was accomplished under that scheme which did tend not a little to mitigate the condition of affairs in Macedonia. Although I know Lord Newton entertains a very poor opinion of the motives by which the two mandatory Powers were inspired, it was our business not to look too minutely into motives, but to see what we could obtain from the action of these Powers, to whom the circumstances naturally pointed, on account of their geographical position, as the two Powers best adapted to carry out the mandate of the others.

The present situation is, no doubt, very serious and disquieting. In the first place it seems to be clear that the state of affairs in the Macedonian vilayets is in itself most deplorable. We read constantly of new outrages, one more harrowing than another, and I am afraid that in the Papers to be laid before us we shall have presented a very gloomy picture indeed. Then we come to the recent action of the Austrian Government in obtaining from the Turkish Government a concession for the construction of a railway. I agree with my noble friend that it is very easy to make too much of an occurrence of this kind. Austria-Hungary has, under international agreements, special rights over that particular region where the contemplated railway would be constructed. While I fully admit that, I am bound also to add that one has to look at the impression created in the public mind, and particularly in the public mind on the spot, by such isolated action for its own advantage on the part of one of these two Powers, and I am afraid the impression created has been a very disquieting one.

But what seems most alarming of all is what my noble friend tells us of the attitude and disposition of the Powers with regard to further reforms. I gather from him that as to the renewal of the mandate to the two Powers and the extension of the appointments of the Civil Agents we are engaged in a not very promising wrangle with the Porte. I understand that in regard to the *gendarmerie* the Powers are by no means at one, and that there is reluctance to adopt proposals which His Majesty's Government—I venture to think rightly—considers indispensable if order is to be restored in the disturbed districts. I quite concur with my noble friend in what he has said that the first condition for material improvement in the Balkan Peninsular is some effective repressive measure to put an end to the disorder and anarchy now prevailing in those regions.

Then I understand my noble friend to say in regard to judicial reforms, to which he gives second place in order of importance, that the Powers, while not disagreeing as to the kind of reforms to be demanded, are hesitating, or are not prepared, to press these demands at the present moment. The situation that has arisen is a very serious one, indeed, and I am not surprised that my noble friend went on to tell us that it is a situation His Majesty's Government cannot accept. I understand it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to press again not only on the Porte, but on the signatory Powers, the appointment of an independent governor, appointed with the consent of the Powers, and not removable except with their consent. In passing, I may say that I think my noble friend is right when he says it is by no means essential that the official to be chosen for these high functions should be a Christian. I would say, "Take the best man you can get, Christian or Mahomedan." I understand that to be the aspiration—if I may so put it—of His Majesty's Government, for I did not gather from what my noble friend said that His Majesty's Government are at the moment seriously pressing upon the Powers the adoption of this proposal. He said, very properly, that His Majesty's Government did not favour any very hurried plan, nor were, indeed, yet prepared to put forward what he called a definite proposal. He said that for the present the Government maintained an observant attitude, and that in due course we might look for the demand for the appointment of an independent governor.

My noble friend spoke of what he called an appeal to Europe in favour of a new departure of the kind described. Now I was very glad to hear that expression, "an appeal to Europe," fall from his lips, for if I may make any suggestion it is this—that we should up to the very last spare no effort to carry the other Powers with us in support of a policy of this kind. But, much as I believe in this policy, I should be very sorry to contemplate an attempt on the part of this country by single-handed action in the Balkan Peninsula, to impose any arrangement of the kind upon the Powers. Single-handed action on the part of this country, about which so many people have talked glibly and lightheartedly, means, after all, that in the end you may have to send an army of occupation to see to the carrying out of your scheme of reforms. Much as I deplore the long-continued sufferings of the people of Macedonia, I should be very sorry to see this country embark on a single-handed attempt to impose on Europe any arrangement of this kind, however much it might fall in with my own ideas, or with the policy which I have myself at one time or another advocated. I cordially wish success to the efforts which His Majesty's Government are making; and I trust that, by the energy of their arguments and by the appeals which they are making to public feeling not only of this country but of other countries, they may, in the end, succeed in carrying with them the other Powers concerned and in obtaining a scheme of reforms more effectual than any of those which have passed through a kind of experimental stage during the past few years, with, I am bound to say, very disappointing and unsatisfactory results.

On Question, Motion agreed to and carried accordingly.

House adjourned at five minutes past Eight o'clock, till Tomorrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 25th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, that, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz.:—Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, pursuant to the Order of the House of the 21st day of February, That, in the case of the following Bill, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.

Derby Gas Bill; Dover Graving Docks Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill. Finchley Urban District Council Bill (by Order); Leicester Corporation Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Standing Orders: Ordered, That Mr. Shackleton be discharged from the Select Committee on Standing Orders; and that Mr. Jenkins be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Ellis.*)

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.] Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [Lords]. Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

PETITIONS.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND).

Petition from Kinsale for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From East Ardesley; Morley; Much Wenlock; Patrington; and Shoeburyness; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Hurstpierpoint (two); Leicester (two); London; Retford; Sileby; Southwark (two); Wadsley Bridge (two); and West Bromwich; to lie upon the Table.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions for alteration: From Gauldswell; and Perth; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Beckenham; Bournemouth; Hull; Meltham; and Sunderland; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (BOMBAY POLITICAL DEPARTMENT).

Return [presented 24th February] to be printed. [No. 71.]

PERSIA, No. 1 (1908).

Copy presented, of Extract from a Despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India in Council, dated 21st September, 1899, relating to British Policy in Persia, which was referred to in the debate on the Anglo-Russian Convention which took place in the House of Lords on the 6th and 10th February, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CHINA, No. 1 (1908).

Copy presented, of Correspondence respecting the Opium Question in China (with Map) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Mary Ann Guest, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution, 35, Eden Grove, Holloway, London [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Anglesey, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the parish of Holyhead [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY, ETC., BILLS.

Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade upon all the Bills and

Provisional Orders of Session, 1908 relating to Railways, Canals, Tramways, Harbours, and Tidal Waters, and the supply of Electricity, Gas, and Water [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITE (DUBLIN) ACT, 1903.

Account presented, showing the Money issued from the Consolidated Fund under the provisions of The Public Offices Site (Dublin) Act, 1903, and of the Expenditure; the Money expended and borrowed and the Securities created under the said Act for the period ended 31st March, 1907, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 72.]

COLONIAL REPORT (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Report, No. 555 (St. Vincent, Report for 1906–7) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Copy presented, of Memorandum of the Board of Education on the Financial Proposals in connection with the Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (ECCLESIASTICAL CHARGES).

Address for "Return of the Charges of Ecclesiastical Establishments in India for the year 1906–7 on account of the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Church of Rome, and other churches; and showing, as far as possible, in the several provinces of British India, what payments are made at stations: (*a*) Where there are European troops, and (*b*) where there are no European troops."—(*Mr. Herbert Roberts.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Training of Secondary School Teachers.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether having regard to Article 15, Chapter 2, of the Regulations for Secondary Schools, 1907, he proposes, after 31st July, 1908, to make evidence of training a condition for the appointment of any proportion of the teachers in secondary schools receiving Government grants; and whether the Board are prepared to make grants to private institutions for the training of secondary school teachers, provided that the training is recognised by the Board as efficient.

(*Answered by Mr. Lough.*) The article referred to will stand in the next issue of the Regulations; and the Board hope to issue at an early date Regulations prescribing the conditions upon which grants may be made in aid of the training of teachers for secondary schools, but my right hon. friend is not in a position at present to indicate their scope.

Education Authorities and Provision of Meals.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Board of Education if he will state how many education authorities have already put into operation the Education (Provision of Meals) Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Lough.*) Except in cases where it is desired to spend money from the rates upon the purchase of food, local authorities are not required by the Act to inform the Board of Education of their proceedings under it, and I have, therefore, no complete information as to the authorities who have in one way or another taken advantage of its provisions. Twenty-nine local education authorities in England and five in Wales have been authorised by the Board under Section 3 of the Act to spend money out of the rates upon the purchase of food.

Complaints against Increased Railway Rates.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade how many complaints of increased rates have been received at the Board of Trade, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894, during each of the ten years ending 31st December, 1907; and in how many of such cases the increase has been withdrawn or modified in consequence of action taken by the Board of Trade.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The figures for which my hon. friend asks are shown in the following Table, so far as they can be given. The cases dealt with by Mr. Pelham before the year 1899 numbered 1,938. The figures given for 1906 and 1907 are provisional. Too much stress must not be laid on the totals, as in some cases several complaints related to the same matter, and there are others in which it may be doubtful whether an actual increase of rate in the sense of the Act of 1894 was involved.

Complaints of increased Rates received by the Board of Trade during the nine years 1899–1907, inclusive.

Year.	Increases completely withdrawn	Increases modified.	Certificates issued to allow the complaint to be taken before the Railway and Canal Commission.	Complaints not pressed.	No modification effected.	Cases still under consideration.	Total.
1899	1	—	—	2	2	—	5
1900	1	—	17	16	30	—	64
1901	2	16	2	3	2	—	25
1902	—	5	2	4	2	—	13
1903	—	5	3	5	1	—	14
1904	1	2	3	2	1	—	9
1905	—	—	2	2	—	—	4
1906	—	1	2	1	2	—	6
1907	1	1	2	5	2	2*	13

* Counting as one complaint the numerous representations received against the withdrawal by the railway companies of a wastage allowance for coal lost in transit.

Post Office Savings Bank.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that while the Fiftieth Report of the Postmaster-General, which, in accordance with the provisions of The Savings Banks Act, 1904, omitted a valuation of the securities held by the Post Office Savings Bank Fund, did nevertheless contain a detailed statement of the Terminable Annuities held, subsequent reports do not contain such a detailed statement, but, in lieu thereof, a mere statement of the aggregate amount of annuities operating to replace stock, and annuities operating to replace cash; will he explain why the details given in the Fiftieth Report have been omitted from subsequent Reports; and will he consider the question of giving in his forthcoming Report a detailed statement of these annuities.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The statement of the nature and amount of the securities held for the Savings Bank, which is inserted in the Postmaster-General's Report, is, as stated in the Report, an extract from the statutory Return presented to Parliament each year by the Treasury. The Postmaster-General, therefore, is not responsible for settling the form in which the statement is drawn up.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the difference between the amount of withdrawals from the Post Office Savings Bank in the year 1906, estimated by him on 11th April, 1907, as £43,804,500, and the amount stated in the Postmaster-General's Fifty-third Report, viz., £43,763,002; and will he explain how the difference arose, and why, more than three months after the closing of the books, the correct amount of the withdrawals had not been ascertained within £40,000.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The amount of withdrawals stated in the Postmaster-General's Report represents the value of the warrants issued in the course of the year. This figure is not usually made up until all the transactions for each quarter have been finally proved. The estimated figure given in reply to the hon. Member for Finsbury on 11th April, was based, as regards the last quarter of the year, on the withdrawals actually paid by postmasters in that period, a figure which is available immediately. The difference of £40,000 is due to an unusual variation between the value of the warrants issued but not yet presented at the beginning and end of that quarter respectively.

Vessels struck off Effective List.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many battleships, armoured cruisers, protected cruisers, and torpedo-boats destroyers have been struck off the list of efficient fighting ships in 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The only vessel struck off the effective list in 1907 was the torpedo-boat destroyer "Ariel," sunk off Malta.

Lancaster County Magistrates.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, whether he can state how many of those who were appointed county magistrates for the County of Lancaster during the years 1906 and 1907 were borough magistrates at the time they were appointed county magistrates.

(*Answered by Sir Henry Fowler.*) Of the county magistrates appointed in 1906 and 1907 I find that seventeen were borough magistrates at the time of their appointment.

Board of Education and the Charitable Trusts Act in Wales.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Education, whether the Welsh Department of the Board of Education exercises the powers of the Board under the Charitable Trusts Act with regard to Wales; whether any officer of the Charitable Trusts section of the Board has been transferred to the Welsh Department; and whether there is any lawyer in the Welsh Department trained in Charity Commission work.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The powers of the Board of Education under the Charitable Trusts Acts are exercised by the Board and not by any department of it. The Welsh Department have the advice of the legal branch where legal questions are concerned. The Answer to the last paragraph is in the affirmative.

LORD R. CECIL: To ask the President of the Board of Education, upon what grounds the decision given in February, 1906, by the Charitable Trusts section of the Board of Education with reference to the Devonald endowment, Narberth, Pembrokeshire, which held the trust to be a denominational one, has been reversed by the Welsh Department of the Board, and a scheme substituted, alienating two-thirds of the endowment to secular purposes; whether an attempt to secularise this charity was made by the county council in 1896; and whether the Charity Commissioners then held the trust to be denominational.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) This endowment was founded by deed of 31st March, 1832, for the maintenance of a free school, the only reference to Church teaching being contained in a recital. The Board of Education have not reversed their decision of February, 1906, to treat the trust as denominational; but, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, including the change in the conditions of public education since the date of the original foundation, and upon consideration of the numerous objections received from the local education authority and numerous other public bodies locally interested, as well as the representations made by the trustees, the Board have come to the conclusion that justice can best be done to all interests by an appointment of the endowment as follows: One-third of the income to be allotted to the rector and churchwardens of Narberth for the purposes of solely religious instruction, with liberty to apply such income to managers' purposes of the Narberth Church of England School, and the remaining two-thirds to be administered by a representative governing body, of which the rector would be an *ex-officio* member, for the advancement of secular education in the locality by means of exhibitions tenable at institutions of higher education without religious restrictions. The Board cannot find that any opinion as to the denominational character of the trust was expressed by the Charity Commissioners in 1896 or about that time. The foundation was the subject of communication between the Charity Commissioners and persons locally interested in 1895 with a view to a scheme under the Welsh intermediate Education Act, but no proposals for a scheme were submitted by the joint education committee under that Act.

Increase of Wages in Royal Dockyards.

MR. W. T. WILSON: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether the Lords of the Admiralty have considered the petitions of the workmen employed in the Royal dockyards, which were forwarded to them early in 1907; and, if so, have any of the trades had an increase of wages granted them; and what is the increase, if any, and to which trades has it been granted.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The petitions have now been considered and the Admiralty hope to be in a position to promulgate the decision some time in March.

Prices of English, American, and Canadian Beef.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what are the average prices of English beef and United States and Canadian port-killed beef for each of the years 1903 to 1907, inclusive.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Prior to 1904 there are no official statistics giving the desired information. The average prices for 1904 to 1907, inclusive are:—

Year.	British.		United States of America and Canadian (Port Killed).	
	First quality.	Second quality	First quality.	Second quality.
	Per cwt. *s.* *d.*	Per cwt. *s.* *d.*	Per cwt. *s.* *d.*	Per cwt. *s.* *d.*
1904	52 6	47 6	49 0	44 0
1905	51 6	47 0	48 0	43 0
1906	51 0	47 0	47 6	43 6
1907	53 0	49 0	51 0	47 0

Foreign Meat.

MR. CHAPLIN: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture what proportion of meat sold in Smithfield Market in 1907 was of foreign origin; and how this proportion compares with 1897, 1887, and 1877.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) We will endeavour, as far as possible, to obtain the information asked for, and we are in communication with the clerk of the market on the subject.

Publication of Annual Report of the Board of Agriculture.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture whether there are special reasons for the delay in publishing the Report for the year 1906 until the present year of the proceedings under the Sale of Food and other Acts; and whether steps will be taken to publish in future the Annual Report of this Department within a few months of the year to which it refers.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The delay in the publication of the Report to which my hon. friend refers was due partly to the absence on sick leave of the officer responsible for a considerable portion of it and partly to the services of other members of the staff concerned being required for more urgent work. We fully recognise the importance of issuing our various Reports with as little delay as possible, and I hope that the Report in question for the year 1907 will be issued at a much earlier date than was that for 1906.

Licensing Compensation — Ante-1869 Beerhouses.

Mr. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any difference is made in calculating the compensation under the 1904 Licensing Act, between ante-1869 beerhouses and fully-licensed houses, on account of the position occupied by the 1869 houses prior to the passing of the 1904 Act; and, if so, how is it arrived at.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I understand that, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 2 (1) of the Licensing Act of 1904, as interpreted in the judgment of Kennedy J. in re Ashby's Cobham Brewery Company, the answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative, and that the method of calculating the difference may take the form of allowing a higher number of years in the case of "ante-1869" beerhouses for the purpose of capitalisation. The precise details of any such calculation depend on the circumstances of every case.

Revenue from Duties on Alcohol.

Mr. BARNARD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amount of revenue collected by the Excise and Customs on alcohol during the last-known financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The net receipt from the Customs and Excise duties on alcohol for 1906–7 was £36,296,988.

Applications for Labourers Cottages at Strabane.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the applications of George Devenny and J. J. Kildea to the Strabane (No. 2) Rural District Council for cottages under the Labourers Acts, one on the farm of Mr. Cunningham, Castletown, the other on the farm of Mr. G. Hyndman, Trentagh; can be say why their applications were refused by the Local Government Board inspector; and whether he will take steps to have their cases reconsidered, so that these men, who are living in unsanitary houses, may have cottages provided for them by the rural district council under the Labourers Acts.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) In the case of Devenny, the reason assigned by the inspector for refusing the application was that the applicant had vacated the house examined by the sanitary officer, and had gone to reside in Newton-Hamilton. The applicant Kildea refused to agree to the site selected by the rural district council, and the inspector had therefore no option but to reject the application. As the inspector has completed his order in respect of the scheme, he cannot now reconsider these applications.

Appointments of Irish Magistrates.

MR. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he could state the number of appointments to the Commission of the Peace in Ireland from 1st January, 1906, until 31st January, 1907, the number for each province, county, and county borough, respectively, and the number of Catholics appointed in each of these divisions, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) If the hon. Member should think fit to move for a Return in continuation of the Return, Magistrates (Ireland), of 1906 (House of Commons Return 136 of that year), no objection will be offered to granting it. That Return gives particulars of the magistrates appointed for each county, and it shows, among other things, the numbers of each religious denomination appointed.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Stoker Ratings of the Fleet.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the conditions necessary for advancement among the stoker ratings of the Fleet are being voluntarily accepted by the men, or is pressure, owing to the dearth of candidates, being brought to bear upon many who are unwilling.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): Qualifications for advancement is purely voluntary, and I am unaware of any ground for the suggestion that pressure is being brought to bear upon men who are unwilling to qualify.

Policing the Persian Gulf.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether it is proposed to increase the strength of the China Squadron, and to send a warship, superior to the class of a gunboat, to patrol the Persian Gulf.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The answer to both parts of this Question is in the negative. The Persian Gulf is visited from time to time by the larger ships of the East Indies Squadron.

MR. REES: What is the size of the largest vessel?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: My hon. friend will find that in the Navy List.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what is the name of the gunboat detailed for duties in the Persian Gulf; whether any other vessels assist her in the suppression of piracy; and what was the speed at her last full-speed trial.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The gunboats "Redbreast" and "Lapwing" and the Special Service vessel "Sphinx" are told off for duties in Indian waters, principally in the Persian Gulf. These duties, in which they are assisted from time to time by other ships of the East Indies Squadron, include the suppression of piracy. At the latest machinery trials, with authorised natural draught power, the speeds attained were:—"Redbreast," 11·31 knots; "Lapwing," 10·12 knots; "Sphinx," 9·16 knots.

Privileges of Retiring Volunteers.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a Volunteer (non-commissioned officer or private), now serving, who continues his service by enlistment in the new Territorial Force will, on completion of twenty years efficient service, including that already served as an efficient Volunteer under the old system, be entitled to the Volunteer Service Medal or some reward equivalent to that now enjoyed in the like case by the old Volunteer; and whether such non-commissioned officer or private, on continuing and completing ten years efficient service as a sergeant, including that already served as an efficient Volunteer under the old Act, will be allowed, on completion of the terms of his enlistment, to retire with his rank and uniform with the letter R on his shoulder strap, as enjoyed under the old Volunteer Regulations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddingtonshire): This question is under consideration, but

I hope that it may be found possible to prevent Volunteers who transfer to the Territorial Force from suffering in this respect.

Advisory Council on Attestation.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War who will be the members of the Advisory Committee of the War Office to whom the new form of attestation for those enlisting in the Territorial Army will be submitted.

Mr. HALDANE: I am afraid I cannot at present state the names of the members, as I have not yet had replies from all the persons whom I have asked to serve on the Advisory Council; but I hope I shall be able to give the names in a few days.

Mr. COURTHOPE: When does the right hon. Gentleman expect the Committee to commence its sittings?

Mr. HALDANE: It is nearly complete, and I hope it will meet almost immediately.

Payment of Military Pensions.

*Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Army Council has reached a decision upon the Report of the Paymaster-General's Committee appointed more than six months ago to consider whether benefit would result from the payment of military pensions in smaller sums and at more frequent intervals than is now the practice; what, if any, is their decision; and why has it not been communicated to the House.

Mr. HALDANE: The Report has been considered. It has not been held to be desirable to adopt all of its recommendations. Arrangements have been made for: (*a*) the payment monthly of all pensioners who desire to be so paid, or where it is clearly shown that, owing to their thriftless or drunken habits, such payment would be advisable (*b*) the payment weekly of pensioners in cases where they become chargeable to the guardians and the latter recommend and are willing to undertake the issue in that way; (*c*) the payment weekly of pensioners by responsible persons who are willing to receive the pension quarterly and dole it out weekly to the pensioner.

*Mr. BYLES: I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman, but may I ask why we were not told this some time ago?

Mr. HALDANE: We have only just been able to come to a final conclusion.

Mr. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Are we to understand that this applies equally to Army Reservists?

Mr. HALDANE: I have spoken only of pensioners, but there is no difference in principle between the two.

Army Horses.

Mr. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the increase of motor traction and the consequent gradual decrease in the number of horses in use in this country, the War Office are taking any, and, if so, what steps to secure the maintenance of the supplies of remounts available for His Majesty's Army.

Mr. HALDANE: The whole question of the supply of suitable horses for military purposes is at present being carefully considered by the Board of Agriculture in concert with the War Office.

Treatment of Invalided Soldiers.

Colonel SEELY (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what steps His Majesty's Government propose to take in order to ensure the proper treatment of men invalided from the Army suffering from tuberculosis.

Mr. HALDANE: I must refer my hon. and gallant friend to my Answer given to the hon. Member for Sunderland on the 18th instant. As my hon. and gallant friend is aware, special efforts are made to secure places for the invalids in civil hospitals, and a notification is sent to the medical officer of health of the town in which the soldier intends to reside.

Colonel SEELY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the great majority of cases of soldiers suffering from tuberculosis discharged from the Army no such places are found, and that they are discharged to their homes, not only to their great discomfort, but to the peril of the civil population? And are we to understand that no steps are to be taken in this matter?

Mr. HALDANE: As I informed the hon. Member opposite the other day, we are quite aware that the case of the soldier suffering from tuberculosis is a hard case, but so is the case of the sailor, of the Post Office employee, and of other Government employees, and so is the case of the great mass of the civil population. The Government as a whole considered this question, and they came to the conclusion that it would not be permissible to deal with the soldier differentially.

Colonel SEELY: Have the right hon. Gentleman and the Government considered that the case of the soldier is quite different from that of others, seeing that he is discharged from the Army at the end of seven years and cannot make provision to go into a civil place as in the case of other Government employees, who are enlisted practically for life.

Mr. HALDANE: The same difficulty arises in other cases, and to deal with the soldier in this fashion would, in the opinion of the Government, be to treat the soldier differentially.

Mr. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that the Committee were unanimous in their recommendation that some provision should be made, and when the Committee's Report will be laid on the Table of the House?

Mr. HALDANE: It is quite true that the Committee were unanimous, but, as I say, the Government has considered this question as a whole and from a wider point of view than that of the Army merely, and the principle involved is one that is so far-reaching that the Government are not prepared to adopt the recommendation.

British Cavalry Establishment.

Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can give the number of cavalry officers and men on the British establishment on 1st January, the number of cavalry horses on the British establishment at the same date, and the number or proportion of those horses considered fit for active service; and whether he can also state the number of officers and men and the number of horses required, apart from drafts, for the cavalry division of four brigades and other regular cavalry of the expeditionary force.

Mr. HALDANE: On 1st January, the strength of the cavalry on what is technically known as the British establishment, *i.e.*, at Home and in the Colonies, amounted to 566 officers and 14,112 men; and there were on the strength 10,217 horses, of which 9,195 may be estimated as fit for service. For the expeditionary force in the field, exclusive of reinforcing drafts, 327 officers, 7,055 men, and 8,043 horses are required.

Behar Disturbances—The Bloomfield Judgment.

Mr. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the judgment of the High Court of Calcutta in Criminal Appeal No. 509 of 1907, known as the Bloomfield case, has excited the alarm and apprehension of European planters in Behar living with their families in solitary situations, and whether he can bring the case under the review of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; and, if not, whether any steps will be taken to prevent a recurrence of what is regarded as a failure of justice.

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Morley, Montrose Burghs): I am not prepared to express any opinion as to the decision of the High Court of Calcutta to which my hon. friend refers, nor am I aware of the existence of the alarm which he mentions. In any case, I am advised that the decision involves no point of legal principle on which an appeal to the Privy Council could be founded.

The Rawal Pindi Prosecutions.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that six members of the Indian Bar, of whom three are barristers of the London Inns of Court, were, early in May, 1907, arrested and kept in prison, bail being refused, for five months, and then released within a few days of their being acquitted at Rawal Pindi for complicity in sedition, the evidence tendered against them having been characterised by Mr. Martineau, the Judge before whom they were tried, as improbable and unreliable, false, fabricated, and malicious, the speeches which were the foundation of the charge being made in an agitation against excessive enhancement of the land revenue; and whether, having regard to the fact that these six gentlemen of position and education were kept in gaol for 153 days on a baseless charge, he will state what reparation the Government are prepared to make to them for this unmerited suffering, pecuniary loss, and personal humiliation.

Mr. MORLEY: I am aware of the circumstances set out in the beginning of the Question. Application for bail was refused by the magistrate. An appeal was heard by the Punjab Chief Court, and dismissed by them. Mr. Martineau did not use the epithets in the Question of the evidence as a whole, but in respect of some portions of the evidence of particular witnesses, he described them as unreliable. That he did not regard the charge as baseless, in the sense that it was a charge that did not require to be investigated by a magistrate, is shown by the fact that he did not release the accused on bail, as he had the power to do at any moment, if satisfied that no *prima facie* case existed. The foundation of the charge, to use the language of the Question, was that the accused instigated and abetted a riot. I do not think that reasons for such reparation as my hon. friend demands are disclosed.

Sir HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I should like to ask whether a very different complexion has not been placed on the evidence in question by the judgment of the Chief Court at Lahore, on the appeal against the decision of this magistrate?

Mr. MORLEY: I think the hon. Member is giving information rather than asking a Question.

Sleeping Sickness in Uganda.

Mr. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the number of deaths in the Uganda Protectorate from sleeping sickness during the past five years; and if the Government intend to take any action in regard to the prevention of such disease.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Churchill, Manchester, N.W.): It is impossible to obtain accurate statistics regarding the mortality from sleeping-sickness in Uganda, but in a recent despatch the Governor has estimated the number of deaths at 200,000 during the past seven years. Every effort is being made by the Government to combat the disease by scientific investigation under the direction of the Royal Society, by local administrative measures, and by international co-operation with the other Powers whose possessions in Africa are similarly afflicted.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman say if this sleeping sickness is on the increase or decrease?

Mr. CHURCHILL: It is on the decrease in the locality affected, but not by reason of the means of curing it, but because of the exhaustion of the population.

Norwegian Steam Trawlers.

Mr. A. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the total number of steam trawlers registered in Norway.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The information regarding the total number of steam trawlers registered in Norway is not at present available, but inquiry is being made, and the result will be communicated as soon as the information has been received.

Bagdad Railway.

Sir EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether in view of the reported activity of a Central European Power in connection with the pushing forward of the Bagdad Railway scheme and of the contingency of the balance of power in Asia Minor being thereby affected, he will consider the desirability of enlightening the public mind by laying some Papers upon the Table of the House.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Bagdad Railway Convention of 1903 has already been published in the Press; the actual progress made by the railway is known, and I do not see what further information could be given to enlighten the public mind.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON was understood to ask for an assurance that this country would not be definitely committed in connection with this railway until the House had had an opportunity of discussing the matter.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I can give no such general assurance.

Piracy in the Persian Gulf.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Foreign Office have received any representations as to the prevalence of piracy in the Persian Gulf and on the China station; and whether there is reason to believe that piracy has increased since 1904.

SIR EDWARD GREY: As regards the Persian Gulf, the answer to both Questions is in the negative. There wasrecently a case of piracy in the Persian Gulf, and the offenders were captured by one of His Majesty's gunboats and handed over to the authorities. As regards China, piracy has been prevalent on the Canton and West Rivers during the latter half of 1906, and during 1907; and, in consequence, a patrol of those waters was established in November last by the Commander-in-Chief on the China Station. The British vessels have since been withdrawn on the organisation by the Chinese authorities of what appears likely to be an effective preventive service of their own.

Egyptian Provincial Councils.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the scheme for extending the power of provincial councils in Egypt which has been issued in Arabic, will also be published in an English translation; whether the extended powers now proposed for the provincial councils are to be other than advisory, and such as can be superseded by the Ministry of the Interior or the Council of Ministers; and whether, in giving the qualification for membership of a provincial council at an annual payment of £50 in taxes on land within the province for which a candidate is elected, this being the qualification appointed form mebership on the legislative council, the measure will deprive the provincial councils of the assistance of many Egyptians otherwise competent to render efficient services as representative of their constituencies.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have not got the information asked for, but I will make inquiries.

Miners' Nystagmus—Case of Ralph Harrison.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of a miner, Ralph Harrison, of Stoke-upon-Trent, who claimed at the local county court compensation under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, on the ground that he was suffering from a disease called miners' nystagmus; whether this disease has been defined and scheduled as a trade disease by the Home Department under Clause 8 of the Workmen's Compensation Act; and what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): My hon. friend has been good enough to send me a newspaper report of this case from which it appears that the proceedings were taken, not under the provisions of Section 8 which relate to industrial diseases, but under the other provisions of the Act relating to accidents; that the County Court Judge held that the case was not one of an accident, but advised the applicant's solicitor to consider his client's position in regard to Section 8. The provisions of that section were extended to miners' nystagmus by my order of May last, and, if Mr. Harrison was disabled by the disease, it was clearly under Section 8 that his claim should have been made.

Coal Statistics.

MR. GLOVER (St. Helens): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of tons of coal raised during 1907, and the number of days per week and hours per day from bank to bank in each of the inspectors of mines districts.

MR. GLADSTONE: The number of tons of coal raised during 1907 was approximately 267,000,000. The latest information in my possession as to the hours of work in coal mines is that which was obtained for the Departmental Committee on the Eight Hours Day for Miners. I would refer my hon. friend to the appendices of that Report.

Fatal Accidents in Mines.

MR. GLOVER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can give the number of fatal accidents in and about the mines of the United Kingdom during 1907, the number of hours worked at the time of the fatal accident, and the number of non-fatal accidents during the same period.

MR. GLADSTONE: The number of fatal accidents in and about mines during 1907 reported to the mines inspectors was for mines under the Coal Mines Acts, 1156, resulting in 1,239 deaths; for mines under the Metalliferous Mines Acts, 33, resulting in 34 deaths. Information as to the hours of the shift in which the accidents occurred is not available in a statistical form. The figures of non-fatal accidents in 1907 are not yet ready.

Case of Dorothy Downing.

MR. MONTGOMERY (Somersetshire, Bridgwater): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that at Leighton Buzzard Police Court, on Tuesday, 18th February last, a girl of thirteen years of age was sent by the magistrate to a reformatory for five years for stealing; whether he is aware that the theft was more of a childish raid; that the articles stolen were mainly of no use to her and have all since been returned; and whether, under the circumstances, he will take steps to hand over this child to its mother.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the sentence on Dorothy Downing (the only child of her mother), a child of thirteen, who has been sent by the Leighton Buzzard magistrate to a reformatory for robbery; and if he can see his way to reduce the sentence.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have made inquiry into this case, but am not prepared to take the action suggested by my hon friend. It appears from the proceedings in court that the girl in question was sent away from school for misconduct, including intoxication, and that she has since been running wild and associating with lads of undesirable character. A month ago the girl was found beating her mother, who has informed the police that she is quite unable to control her. When she stole the articles for which she has been convicted she had with her two little boys, aged ten and eleven respectively; she herself is thirteen, and is described as precocious for her age; she appeared to be utterly callous when in court. The bench, which consisted of six justices, considered the question of sending the girl to an industrial school, but were of opinion that in the interests of the other inmates they were not justified in adopting this course. It appears to me that in committing the girl to a reformatory school the magistrates exercised a wise discretion, and that the training and care she will now receive offer the best chance for her future. The letters on this case which have appeared in the newspapers show a total misconception of the reformatory school system. The object of committal to a reformatory is not punishment but reformation, and the result of the work of the schools has been most encouraging.

*MR. BYLES: Does the right hon. Gentleman remember that last year this House with some labour passed a Probation of Offenders Act and does he not think this is a case in which the child might have been dealt with under the gentle operation of that Act?

MR. GLADSTONE: The case was very carefully considered by six justices, who no doubt considered whether that was practicable or not.

Unemployment in Canada.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can state the present or recent number and percentage of unemployed in the mining and metal industries in Canada.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The information which my hon. friend requires as regards actual numbers and percentages is not available, but I have the information given in the Canadian *Labour Gazette* for January showing the state of employment in the mining and metal industries in various localities of the Dominion in December last. It is as follows—

Tables showing the state of employment in the Mining and Metal Engineering and Shipbuilding Industries of Canada during the month of December, 1907. (Extracted from the Canadian *Labour Gazette* for January, 1908.)

This Table is based largely on the reports of the correspondents of the *Gazette*. The terms employed are divided into two groups, the order indicating the degree to which general conditions were favourable or unfavourable, as follows—

(1) Active, busy, very busy. (2) Quiet, dull, very dull.

City and District of Correspondent.	Mining.	Metal, Engineering, Shipbuilding.
Nova Scotia:		
Sydney -	Very busy	Active
Westville -	"	"
Halifax - -	"	"
Amherst -	"	"
Prince Edward Island:		
Charlottetown	"	"
New Brunswick:		
Moncton -	Active	"
St. John -	"	Busy
Quebec:		
Quebec - -	"	Active
Sherbrooke -	Busy	Quiet
Three Rivers -	"	Active
St. Hyacinthe	"	"
Montreal -	"	"
Maisonneuve -	"	Busy
Hull - -	Quiet	"
Ontario:		
Ottawa - -	"	"
Kingston -	Active	Quiet
Belleville -	"	Busy
Peterboro -	Dull	Active
Toronto -	"	"
Niagara Falls	"	"
St. Catherines	"	"
Hamilton -	"	"
Ontario (*cont.*):		
Brantford -	Dull	Quiet
Guelph -	"	"
Berlin - -	"	Very dull
Woodstock -	"	Quiet
Stratford -	"	Active
London - -	"	Dull
St. Thomas -	"	Quiet
Chatham -	"	"
Windsor -	"	"
Sault St. Marie	"	Active
Manitoba:		
Winnipeg -	"	Quiet
Brandon -	"	Active
Saskatchewan:		
Regina - -	"	Quiet
Moose Jaw -	Busy	Active
Alberta:		
Calgary -	"	Quiet
Edmonton -	"	Dull
British Columbia:		
Nelson - -	Very dull	"
New Westminster -	"	Quiet
Vancouver -	"	"
Victoria -	"	Active
Nanaimo -	Very busy	"

Weighing of Coal Trucks at Keighley and Morecambe.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received complaints as to the weighing of coal trucks at Keighley and Morecambe stations by the Midland Railway Company; and whether he will forthwith institute a full inquiry into the weighing of coal trucks, either empty or full at the collieries, or at railway stations equipped with weighing-machines for such a purpose, with a view to promoting legislation for such an adjustment of The Weights and Measures Act, 1889, as to secure honest trading between colliery proprietors and their customers by placing them under the same regulations as apply to retail coal merchants in regard to having to supply the full amount of net weight of coal that is specified in their invoices.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Complaints have been received with reference to the weighing of certain coal wagons at the stations named; inquiry is being made of the railway company concerned and I will inform my hon. friend of the result. As regards the general question of weighing of coal wagons at collieries and on rail, various suggestions have been received and will be considered when any amendment of the Weights and Measures Act is under consideration. In the meantime I might point out that the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, would appear to expose to heavy penalties any person incorrectly invoicing the quantity of coal forwarded.

Labour on the Donegal Railway.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the excessive hours and undermanning of the Donegal Railway, managed by the Joint Committee of the Midland and Great Northern Railway Companies, whose servants are working under no properly graded system, some in uniform and some not at the intermediate stations, and from the station master to the miles man doing all and sundry work often up to fourteen hours per day; and whether, seeing that this want of system and consequent want of responsibility expose the travelling public to risk of accident, he will take steps to bring about such change in the working of this line as will give more confidence and comfort to all those who travel by it.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The Board of Trade have been in communication with the Joint Committee on several occasions with regard to the hours of their employees, and certain improvements have been effected. The matter will be kept in view. The other points to which the hon. Member refers are questions primarily for the consideration of the Joint Committee, but I shall be happy to consider any specific cases submitted to me in which the safety of the public appears to be involved.

Procedure under The Trade Marks Act, 1905.

*MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade can he state whether rules of court have been made for settling the procedure under Sections 12 (4), 14 (6), and 35 (1) of The Trade Marks Act, 1905; and, if not, what is the reason of the delay.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: So far as I am aware no rules of court have been made under the sections in question. It has been considered that no such rules have been required having regard to Rule 121 of the Trade Mark Rules, 1906, and to the established practice prevailing at the passing of the Act with respect to applications to the court for the rectification of the Register of Trade Marks.

*MR. BOLAND: Is it the fact that the Rules Committee have not met to decide on the issue of any rules?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I must ask for notice of that Question.

Employment in the Belfast Linen Trade.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the average number of men, women, and children employed in mills and factories connected with the linen trade in Belfast during the period 1898–1907, inclusive, the average wages earned by them, and the number of hours worked by them per day respectively; and the number of men, women, and children employed during the months of December, 1907, and January, 1908, the hours worked by them per day, and the average wages earned by them respectively.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am unable to give all the particulars asked for by the hon. Member, but I will give such information as is available respecting numbers employed and average earnings of the people employed in linen industry in Belfast. It is as follows—

Number of Persons Employed in Mills and Factories connected with the Linen Trade in Belfast in 1901 and 1904.

(Compiled from the Returns made to the Home Office.)

———	1901.	1904.
Persons above 18 years of age:		
Males	4,842	4,755
Females	16,074	16,682
Young persons between 13 and 18 employed as Full-timers:		
Males	1,647	1,600
Females	3,523	3,572
Children employed as Half-timers:		
Males	872	682
Females	1,719	1,269
Total all Ages:—		
Males	7,367	7,037
Females	21,316	21,523
Grand Total	28,683	28,560

Average Earnings per week in 1905, 1906 and 1907, and Earnings for one week in December, 1907, and one week in January, 1908, of Workpeople employed in Linen Factories in Belfast District.

	s.	d.
1905	11	3·3
1906	11	8·2
1907	12	4·3
One week in December, 1907	11	4·7
One week in January, 1908	10	6·4

These figures are obtained by averaging the wages earned by about 16,000 operatives, including men and women, also lads and girls (half-timers and full-timers). The figures for 1905, 1906, 1907, are the mean for twelve weeks, *i.e.*, one week in each month. In both the months of December, 1907, and January, 1908, there appears to have been a good deal of short time in Belfast.

Vaccination Law.

Mr. WALKER (Leicestershire, Melton): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, seeing that the Vaccination (Scotland) Act, 1907, enables parents to avail themselves of its provisions whatever the age of their children may be, whereas the Vaccination Act, 1907, is not retrospective, he will introduce a measure to assimilate the law in England and Wales to that in Scotland.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): The circumstances in relation to this matter were not the same in the two countries under the Vaccination Acts in force prior to the legislation of last session. In England, as my hon. friend is aware, a parent could obtain exemption from penalties for not having his child vaccinated if he satisfied two justices or a magistrate that he conscientiously believed that vaccination would be prejudicial to the health of the child. There was no such provision in force in Scotland. Hence when exemption on the ground of conscientious objection was allowed by the Scottish Act of last year, it was necessary to provide for the case of children born before the passing of the Act; but there was no similar need as regards England. In future in both countries a parent will only obtain exemption if he makes the requisite statutory declaration within a prescribed period after the birth of the child. It does not appear to me necessary to introduce a Bill on this subject.

Incidence of Rating on Land.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the aggregate amount paid in rates by agricultural property in respect of charges for Poor Law services, police, main roads, asylums, and education; and the amount paid by all other rateable property.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: The amount of rates levied on the occupiers of agricultural land in England and Wales has not been ascertained for any year since 1895–1896, and I am unable to give the proportionate amounts asked for. But I have had calculations made which throw some light on the subject. I may point out that the amounts raised by rates for five purposes mentioned in the Question are obtained from poor rates and other general rates and form part only of the total proceeds thereof. As regards the charges for lunatic asylums and main roads, it cannot be exactly stated how much falls on the rates as distinct from the part which falls on Exchequer Grants and other receipts. In the year 1904–1905, the expenditure under these heads amounted to £3,500,000. As to expenditure on poor relief, police, and education, the amount estimated to have fallen on rates in the year 1905–1906 was £24,200,000. Calculated on the total amount paid in the year 1895–1896 by the occupiers of agricultural land on account of poor rates, and the smaller rateable value of that property in the later year combined with the much greater rateable value of other property, the proportion of the £27,700,000 paid by them would be about £1,500,000. This calculation necessarily disregards other changes affecting the incidence of rates which have taken place in the interval.

Incidence of Rating on Personal and Real Property.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what was the amount contributed in rates, according to the latest Returns, for Poor Law, police, main roads, asylums, and education by personal property and real property, respectively.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: It is not practicable to give the information desired. As the hon. Member is no doubt aware, the rates are levied on the occupiers of real property. The question of the ultimate incidence of rates is one which has been much discussed, but I am afraid I cannot deal with it within the limits of a Question. I may, however, refer the hon. Member to the report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation and the papers published with that Report.

Dangers of Glanders—Rotterdam Old Horse Trade.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to an inquest held by Dr. Waldo on 18th February, 1908, on a man named Shaw, who was stated to have died of glanders contracted while shipping worn-out horses to Belgium and Rotterdam for human consumption; whether the evidence showed that such horses were returned in the shape of sausages and tinned meat, and that though such food might be cooked it was impossible wholly to destroy the germs; and whether, under these circumstances, his Department will take immediate action with a view to removing possible danger of spreading disease.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to the inquest referred to. I understand that one of the witnesses thought that to some small extent sausages made abroad from horseflesh were exported to this country, but I am informed that he did not say that horseflesh was returned to this country in tins. I am advised that the bacillus of glanders if present in meat, would not be destroyed if the cooking of the meat was imperfectly carried out, but that cooking which heated the meat to 55° Centigrade for ten minutes might kill the bacillus. As I stated in reply to a previous Question the importation of sausage meat is receiving my consideration in connection with the regulations which I am preparing under the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act of last session.

Overcrowding of Poplar Workhouse.

MR. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, if his attention has been called to the overcrowding at the Poplar workhouse, and to the fact that in consequence a number of the inmates are sleeping on the floor; and if he intends to take any action in the matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has been called to the overcrowding at the Poplar Workhouse, and in consequence I assented in December last to the proposal that the buildings at Forest Gate which belong to the guardians and which were formerly used as a school should be opened as an additional workhouse. The necessary arrangements for the use of the buildings for this purpose have been pressed on with all practicable speed, and I understand that by the 8th instant seventy-eight able-bodied men had been accommodated there, that the number had been increased to 132 on Sunday last, and that fifty more were to go there yesterday. I hope that the pressure will be removed at an early date.

La Plata Cattle Trade.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether it has come to the knowledge of the Board that 15 per cent. of the cattle slaughtered in La Plata for exportation into Great Britain and Ireland are tuberculous; if not, will the Board have inquiries made through disinterested parties; and will the Board have extensive tests made for tuberculosis in imported La Plata beef, as it is well known that 15 per cent. is a low estimate of the tuberculous beef exported from Buenos Ayres.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Perhaps I may reply to this Question. It has not come to the knowledge of the Local Government Board that 15 per cent. of the cattle slaughtered in La Plata for exportation to the United Kingdom are tuberculous and their information would not lead them to suppose that such was the case. Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to supply me with any evidence in his possession in relation to this subject.

Liability for Maintenance of Parents.

SIR GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether he is aware that a labourer named Pentney, in the receipt of 15s. a week, was recently adjudged to pay first 1s. and then 6d. per week by the guardians of the Docking Union towards the maintenance of his father, and upon pleading inability to pay was summoned; that four justices unanimously decided they were not satisfied as to his ability and declined to make an order, and in consequence the guardians took off 1s. per week from the old people's relief; and whether, in view of the amending Acts giving discretion to the justices, he is prepared to amend the original Acts, so as to prevent them being applied to labourers at 15s. per week and at the same time stop the guardians from indirectly overriding the decision of the justices.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My hon. and learned friend has asked me to reply to this Question. I am aware of the case referred to in it. I am informed that the son was earning 15s. a week, that his wife earned 1s. a week by washing and at times more, that he had two children, one living at home and earning 6s. a week, the other being in domestic service. I am also informed that the father came before the guardians and stated that his son never gave him anything, and that the guardians took off a shilling a week from the relief in the hope that this would induce the son to contribute to the maintenance of his parent. Such, however, was not the case, and I find that the guardians have now granted the father the extra shilling a week, and have informed the son that they hope he will contribute 6d. towards it. As I have stated on previous occasions, the subject of contributions by relatives is before the Poor Law Commission, and, pending their Report, I do not propose to introduce legislation with regard to it.

SIR GEORGE WHITE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the guardians have passed a resolution that if the relief is again withdrawn the son shall be prosecuted?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have no information as to that.

Hackney Postal Districts.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that in the official Post Office Guide for January 1908, between pages 690 and 691, there is a map showing the postal districts of London, whereon Hackney is represented as being in the Eastern (E.) district, whereas on page 658, under the heading Postal District, Hackney is described as being in the north-eastern (N.E.) district; whether he is aware that no such district is shown on the said map; whether he will explain the reason for this apparent discrepancy; and whether, for the convenience of persons having correspondence with the Hackney district and for the guidance of the Hackney Borough Council, he will state which of the two descriptions is the correct one.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Eastern and North-Eastern Postal Districts were amalgamated for administrative reasons over forty years ago, and this arrangement is still in force. In 1888, however, in deference to the wishes of the inhabitants, permission was given to use the initials N.E., to designate places formerly comprised in the North-Eastern District. A statement to this effect will be found on page 636 of the Post Office Guide in the explanatory notes preceding the list of principal London streets, and arrangements have been made for the insertion in the next issue of a similar note on page 691, facing the map of the London Postal District.

Post Office Circular on the Hobhouse Revision.

MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will place in the Library a copy of the Post Office Circular containing the recent announcement of the steps he is taking to carry into effect the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants; and whether he will supply a copy of this Circular to any hon. Member who applies to him.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have placed copies of the Post Office Circular in the Library, and I shall be very glad to supply a copy to any hon. Member who applies for it.

School Building Grants.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether any preliminary information has been given by the Board of Education to any local authorities as to the amount of building grants they may expect to get after the Board has decided that the proposed schools are necessary.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): Preliminary information has, in some cases, been given as to the amount of grant which might be payable if the school was decided by the

Board to be necessary and if the regulations were found to be complied with.

School Building in Wales.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if local authorities in Wales are acquiring sites and beginning to build schools before any decision has been given, under Sections 8 and 9 of the Education Act, 1902, as to the necessity of such schools, and in some cases before the period of three months required by the Act has elapsed; and whether such action would be within the power of a local authority or would have the approval of the Board.

MR. McKENNA: The Board are aware that several local education authorities in Wales entered into provisional contracts for the acquisition of sites before the expiration of the period of notice required by Section 8 of the Education Act, 1902, but they have no reason to believe that any authority started building operations before the Board's decision upon the necessity of the school had been given. In any case no such action as the hon. Member refers to would be allowed to influence the Board in deciding as to the necessity or otherwise of any school.

Board of Agriculture Offices.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can state what steps, if any, the Government have taken or have in contemplation with a view to securing improved accommodation for the Board of Agriculture.

I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the inquiry promised by him into the *status* of various Government Departments will embrace the question of the urgent need for better accommodation of the Board of Agriculture, and the possibility of housing this Department in one building, suitable to the importance of its functions rather than, as at present, in three totally inadequate offices situate at a considerable distance from each other.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): The matter is engaging my earnest attention; it is, however, a large question, and I am not at present prepared to make any statement on the subject. My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer desires me to add, in reply to the Question put down by the hon. Member to him, that he thinks this matter had better be dealt with apart from the general subject referred to.

Boy Clerks in the Civil Service.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the scheme announced by the Government for the future arrangements as to boy clerks in the Civil Service has been under consideration for sixteen months, and when he proposes to make it known to the House; and whether he will afford an opportunity to the House of discussing it before it becomes operative.

SIR G. KEKEWICH (Exeter): At the same time may I ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any reply has yet been sent to the memorial submitted by the boy clerks in the Civil Service in September, 1906; and, if not, what is the reason for the delay; and why no action has yet been taken to lessen the hardship to the boys, and the waste of time and money caused by the policy of admitting into the public service and training for their duties numbers of boys who have no prospect of permanent employment.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): The question of reducing the number of boy clerks is one of great difficulty, and I regret that I am not yet in a position to make any definite statement on the subject. But the matter will not be lost sight of.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: When does the hon. Gentleman expect to be in a position to give an answer? The matter has now been under consideration fifteen months.

MR. RUNCIMAN: When I have arrived at a decision, I shall be glad to communicate it to the House.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Has the hon. Gentleman no idea how long hence that will be?

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir, I cannot make any promise.

Sir G. KEKEWICH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, why, in view of his assurance that measures are in contemplation to reduce the number of boy clerks in the Civil Service, two examinations of large numbers of candidates for boy clerkships were held in September, 1907, and January, 1908, respectively.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: The existing demand for boy clerks must be met until arrangements can be made for substituting some other kind of labour.

Budget and the Stamp Duties.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the expediency of imposing a small *ad valorem* stamp duty upon all share certificates in joint stock companies.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (for Mr. Asquith): Certainly, Sir.

The Budget.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Budget will be introduced before Easter.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend is not yet in a position to make any statement as to the date of the introduction of the Budget.

Royal Gardens at Kew.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset hire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state the salaries and allowances, if any, of the director, assistant director, and curator of the Royal Gardens at Kew.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somersetshire, S.): The salary of the Director is £1,000 per annum, with residence rent free; that of the Assistant Director is £500—£20—£700 per annum, and that of the Curator is £300—£10—£400 per annum with residence rent free.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: Then I can take it there is no other remnneration?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: Yes.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somersetshire, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state whether the men employed as gardeners in the Royal Gardens at Kew do the whole of the practical work in cultivation of the plant collections under glass, and also a large proportion of the hardy groups; whether the hours of such men are from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, and from daylight to dark in winter; and whether it is the intention of the Government to increase the pay of such men from 21s. per week to 24s. per week, as is paid to the labourers.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The duties and hours of work of the gardeners at Kew are practically as stated in the Question. They are employed on the average of the whole year for fifty-four and-a-half hours a week. Their work is, of course, done under close supervision. The amount of their pay was recently the subject of careful consideration, and it was decided that, regard being had to the advantages obtained by these young men from their training at Kew, the sum of 21s. a week is sufficient to attract the class of men required and to provide them with adequate means of subsistence.

Mr. SUMMERBELL: Is it not the fact that large numbers of men who have been working at Kew for twenty years are at present out of employment?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: I should like notice of that.

Cattle Disease—Imports of Foreign Fodder.

Mr. CORRIE GRANT (Warwickshire, Rugby): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been called to the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease; and whether he has any evidence to justify the widespread belief in agricultural districts that the disease was imported with foreign hay or straw.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The reply is in the affirmative to both questions. I may perhaps be allowed to add that my noble friend proposes to issue an Order prohibiting the importation of hay and straw from certain countries, from which there is a danger of the introduction of foot-and-mouth disease by means of those articles. The Order will not apply to hay or straw used for packing merchandise and manufactured straw not intended for use as fodder or litter. Hay or straw landed for non-agricultural purposes will be allowed to be landed with a licence. The imports of these articles from the countries concerned are small, in the case of hay, less than half 1 per cent. of our total supplies.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): Arising out of that reply I wish to ask whether it is true that a fresh outbreak as it is described in *The Times* of to-day of the dreaded foot-and-mouth disease was discovered in Edinburgh on Sunday night, at Balbirnie Place, Murreyfield. And whether it is the fact, as stated, that the majority of the animals at Balbirnie Place, were bought in Edinburgh on 5th February, the day after the suspicious symptoms were discovered, among Mr. Roberston's Elvanbank herd and that, so far as is known, none of the animals had been in contact with anyone working at Elvanbank. I apologise to the hon. Gentleman for the shortness of my notice, but if he can give a reply it may relieve a good deal of anxiety.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY replied that it was the case that another outbreak had occurred. The disease was discovered on premises about half a mile away from where the first outbreak occurred among animals belonging to the same owner. On 5th February all the animals that had been bought on 4th or 5th February were inspected by officers of the Board and were then found to be perfectly healthy. The origin of the outbreak was uncertain at the present moment, but they knew for certain that the animals were not fed on any imported fodder. Twenty-one cows were affected. They were valued and by this time had no doubt been slaughtered.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Has the hon. Gentleman any information as to the cause of the outbreak?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: It is suspected that the disease must have been carried in some indirect way.

Mr. COURTHOPE asked whether, in view of the fact that the former outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease was traced to imported hay and straw used for packing furniture, the Government would so amend the Order as to make it apply to all hay and straw imported into the country.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY said that though the prohibition only applied to hay and straw used as fodder or for bedding, hay and straw used for commercial purposes must be landed under licence and regulation.

Mr. COURTHOPE: Is it not a fact that the former outbreak was traced to hay and straw imported in the packing of German furniture?

Sir W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.) asked whether the diagnosis was based on the naked eye appearance of the disease, or whether any micro-organism had been discovered.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY said it was doubtful whether any organism had been discovered.

Norwegian Steam Trawlers at Grimsby.

Mr. A. WILLIAMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what is the approximate number of steam trawlers under the Norwegian flag which fish regularly from Grimsby and other English East Coast ports?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): The number of trawlers answering to the description given in my hon. friend's Question fishing in the Moray Firth appear to be fourteen. They all fish from Grimsby.

Scottish Education Bill.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is his intention to introduce an Education Bill for Scotland this Session.

The following questions on the same subject were also asked—

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he intends to introduce an Education Bill for Scotland during the present Session; and can he say at what stage of the session it will be introduced.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): To ask the Prime Minister, what Bills it is proposed to send this session to the Scottish Grand Committee; whether he is aware that five Bills dealing with education in Scotland have been introduced to Parliament during the last seven years, and that failure to proceed with these measures has caused inconvenience to educational authorities in that country: and whether he will, under these circumstances, consider the advisability of introducing another Bill dealing with this subject and sending it to the Scottish Grand Committee at an early date.

MR. SINCLAIR: This subject is at present under close consideration. It does not seem advisable to introduce such a Bill unless sufficient Parliamentary time is likely to be available to permit its being considered and passed into law. I hope to be able to make a definite announcement upon the matter before the Easter Recess. In reply to the remainder of the question of my hon. friend the Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh, I need only add that I believe the facts to be as he has stated: that the inconvenience to which he alludes is best met, as I have no doubt he will agree, by the course proposed, and that, as he is aware, the Standing Orders on the subject establish a general rule by which all Scottish Bills go up to the Scottish Grand Committee.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that an equivalent is given to Scotland for the money allotted to England under the Education Bill?

MR. SINCLAIR: That certainly will be considered.

MR. C. E. PRICE: Am I to accept this as an answer to my question which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has asked me to postpone?

MR. SINCLAIR: If you please, Sir.

Sale of Diseased Meat at Hamilton.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the prosecution of a Hamilton butcher, in December last, for offering for sale diseased meat; whether he is aware that the meat had been passed by the Hamilton officials and that Dr. Dittmar had just previously reported favourably on the system of inspection in that town; and whether he now proposes, in view of these facts, to appoint a man with practical experience to supervise the work of the meat-inspecting officials in the different local authorities.

MR. SINCLAIR: My attention has not previously been called to the prosecution referred to by my hon. friend, so my information is confined to what he now gives me. The Local Government Board report upon the subject of meat inspection in Scotland is now being printed and such points will be considered.

MR. WATT: Has the right hon. Gentleman yet received the report of Dr. Dittmar?

MR. SINCLAIR: That is the report to which I refer.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Will the right hon. Gentleman have inquiries made throughout Scotland as to the practice of offering dying cattle for sale in public yards?

MR. SINCLAIR: I hope the hon. Member will find that subject dealt with in the report.

Small Holdings in Scotland.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will consider what Amendment, if any, is necessary in the Small Landholders Bill to enable cottars, fishermen, and agricultural labourers, to obtain a small holding; and if he will bear in mind the decision of the court in Gilman *v.* Peterson, by which, owing to some ambiguity of words, probably the majority of crofters were placed at great disadvantage.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Subsection (1) of Clause 9 of the Bill was designed to meet the decision referred to by the hon. Member and I think it does so. As regards cottars, fishermen and agricultural labourers, they have the same right to apply for a small holding as anyone else and to obtain one if duly qualified.

Mr. CATHCART WASON asked whether it was possible under the provisions of the Bill as it stood for a landlord to decline to accede to an application.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Member should raise that point on the Bill itself.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I have no chance.

Land Purchase in County Donegal.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can say how much land have the tenants purchased by agreement from their landlords in the County Donegal, under the Land Act of 1903, up to the end of 1907; what was the amount of the purchase money; and if he can say what is the acreage of untenanted agricultural land available for purchase in the County Donegal at present.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): Up to 21st February instant, purchases had been completed in County Donegal in respect of 47,305 acres of land, the total purchase price being £432,699, and the number of purchasing tenants 1,175. In addition, purchase agreements in respect of 4,357 holdings had been lodged, but as these have not yet been dealt with, particulars of the area and purchase price have not yet been tabulated. The area of the untenanted land purchased or agreed to be purchased is 602 acres, and the Estates Commissioners are negotiating for the purchase of 505 acres more. The Commissioners cannot say what the area of the untenanted land available for purchase in the county may be.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants in Donegal.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of evicted tenants that have been reinstated by their landlords in County Donegal, and if he can state how many were reinstated as future tenants and debarred from entering the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed under the Land Act of 1881; and if he will in his promised legislation provide a means by which these future tenants can enter the Court and have a fair rent fixed by the Land Commission for their holdings.

Mr. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that, so far as they can ascertain, fifty-eight evicted tenants have been reinstated in their former holdings in County Donegal by the landlords, but the Commissioners cannot say how many of these are future tenants. As regards possible legislation in respect of future tenants I would refer to the reply given by my right hon. friend to the similar Question of the hon. Member for West Donegal on 12th instant.

Ballingcary Estate, County Cork.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the estate of James Talbot Power, of Ballingcary, County Cork, has been filed with the Estates Commissioners for purchase; if so, when may an inspection of it be expected; has the claim of a sub-tenant named Jeremiah Sheehan, holding from John Creed, been received by them; and, if so, will it be referred to the inspector who is to report on the estate before it is finally vested in the tenants.

Mr. CHERRY: The purchase agreements in respect of this estate were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in August, 1906. It is not possible at present to state when the inspection of the estate will take place. Jeremiah Sheehan has been returned as holding a sub-tenancy under John Creedon, and the question of this sub-tenancy will be duly inquired into and considered by the Commissioners before the sale is completed.

Rule as to Quotations from Official Documents.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): May I ask the Attorney-General a Question which perhaps he will be able to answer without notice? He may remember that in speaking the other day, he quoted from some Irish Report, and in accordance with practice I asked whether he would lay the Report from which he quoted in its entirety, on the Table of the House. He assured me he would do so, as indeed he is obliged by the practice of the House. I am not aware if it has yet been laid, and I shall be glad to know how soon it will be in our hands.

Mr. CHERRY: I should like to have notice of that Question.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Very well; I have no desire to embarrass the right hon. Gentleman.

Strabane Church Lotteries.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY had on the Paper the following Question:—"To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been called to tickets distributed in this country for what is described as an art union drawing in connection with St. Mary's Church, Melmount, Strabane, in which £1,500 worth of prizes are offered, the first of them being stated to be of the value of £100; and whether, in view of the provisions of the Lottery Act, he will say what steps he proposes to take in the matter."

When his name was called, the hon. Member said an intimation had reached him that the Question should have been addressed to the Attorney-General for Ireland. As, however, he thought he had no right to interfere in Irish affairs, he begged to withdraw it.

Cheque Signatures in Irish.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Bank of Ireland, which is the Government Bank in Ireland, accept from their customers cheques signed in Irish; whether the Postmaster-General honours, or is prepared to honour postal orders signed by the payee in Irish; whether the collectors of Inland Revenue in Ireland receive, or are prepared to receive, applications for gun and other licences written or signed in Irish; whether the Government have decided to regard Irish in the future as the commercial banking language of Ireland; and whether it is their intention to instruct the collectors of Customs and Inland Revenue, postmasters, and other Government officials in Ireland to issue notices to the public accordingly in Irish and English.

Mr. BOLAND: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that all sensible banks in this country are quite willing to accept customers who sign their cheques in Irish? If he wishes, I can give him specific information on this point.

Mr. RUNCIMAN (for Mr. Asquith): The relations between the Bank of Ireland and its private customers are not under the control of the Government, and I have no information as to the practice of that Bank with regard to the signatures of its customers' cheques. As regards postal orders, I am informed by my right hon. friend that the Rule is: "If the payee's name be written in characters other than English, the order may be paid, provided that the signature is in similar characters, and appears to agree with the name of the payee as shown in the body of the order. If an order in which the payee's name appears in English characters be receipted by a signature written in another character which the paying officer cannot decipher, the order may be paid if the paying officer is satisfied of the identity of the payee and of the fact that the writing is his signature. The paying officer should add to his signature the words 'known as ———' or 'identified as ———,' as the case may be." In the case of gun and other licences, where the English name and address of an applicant is known to the Inland Revenue officers, they would not refuse to issue a licence on the ground that the application is not made in English. Where however the English name and address is not known, the application must be signed in English before the licence can be issued. The question whether Irish is in the future to be "the commercial banking language" appears to me to be one to be decided by the commercial and banking community itself rather than by the Government. Up to the present it has not been found necessary to issue the notices referred to in the latter part of the Question in Irish as well as English.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Does the hon. Gentleman propose to issue any instructions on the subject?

MR. RUNCIMAN: No, sir, we do not propose to issue any instructions which are unnecessary.

Irish Mail Subsidies.

MR. MOONEY (Newry): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that in the year 1899 the London and North-Western Railway Company agreed to accelerate the Irish mail train running from Euston to Holyhead in connection with the City of Dublin Steampacket Company's mail steamers from Holyhead; whether in that year the London and North-Western Company stated that they could only give the accelerated service if, in addition to the sum received for carrying the mails, they received a further sum of £6,500 per annum; whether this sum has been paid to the London and North-Western Railway Company annually since 1899; whether, according to the official time tables of the London and North-Western Railway Company, this so-called accelerated mail train takes five hours and thirty-five minutes on the journey to Holyhead; whether he is aware that since this subsidy was granted the railway company have run, and are running, a train without subsidy in competition with the London and Kingstown route, known as the London and North-Western boat train, which does the journey to Holyhead in less time than the so-called accelerated train; whether he is aware that, though this money was given to facilitate Irish traffic, the way in which that is done is by packing the mail train with people who are booked to intermediate stations on this side only; and whether, in view of the fact that the London and North-Western Railway Company not only run a faster train in competition with the subsidised accelerated train, but are proposing to alter the route of their steamers so as to bring them also into competition with the mail steamers, it is intended to insert in this year's Estimates provisions for the payment of a subsidy of £6,500 for a train actually slower than the railway company's own boat train.

MR. RUNCIMAN: This matter has had my careful attention during the recess and I have arranged for the payment to the London and North-Western Railway Company for the train in question to cease as from 1st April next. The whole of the amount, however, will not be saved, as the payments to the company for the conveyance of mails in the year 1908–1909 will be increased by £5,500, in return for certain additional facilities to which the Postmaster-General attaches importance in connection with the company's Irish and other mail services.

MR. MOONEY: Am I to understand that although you have taken away £1,000 from the London North-Western Railway Company, you have increased their grant for carrying the mails, and that therefore the company are practically getting this money in another form?

MR. RUNCIMAN: That is not the case.

MR. MOONEY: Is the House to understand that there is greater difficulty in carrying the mails now than in former years, and that that has caused the

Postmaster-General to sanction an increased grant of £5,500?

MR. RUNCIMAN: It is not an increased grant, it is a diminished grant, and any Question with reference to the arrangements for carrying the mails should be addressed to the Postmaster-General.

MR. MOONEY: Has there been a total saving of £6,500 on the one hand, and a further grant of £5,500 to the company on the other hand?

MR. RUNCIMAN: The total reduction will be £1,000.

Gun Licences in Ireland.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Board of Inland Revenue, what has been the number of 10s. gun licences issued in Ireland in each of the five years, 1902–1903 to 1906–1907; and if he can state whether, apart from ordinary fluctuations, there has been a marked increase in the number of such licences issued since 31st March, 1907.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The number of 10s. gun licences issued in Ireland in each of the five years 1902–1903 to 1906–1907 is as follows:—

1902–1903 - - -	18,237
1903–1904 - - -	18,047
1904–1905 - - -	18,484
1905–1906 - - -	18,877
1906–1907 - - -	19,159

As regards the last part of the Question, the majority of gun licences in Ireland are issued by Postmasters, and the Board of Inland Revenue inform me that they will not be in a position to give any information regarding the numbers so issued until the annual Return is received at the end of the financial year.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law with respect to the Assessment of Damages under the Fatal Accidents Acts." [Fatal Accidents (Damages) (No. 2) Bill [Lords.]

NEW BILLS.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

"To amend the Law with regard to the appointment of Justices of the Peace," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis Channing, and Mr. Halley Stewart; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 113.]

SPURIOUS SPORTS BILL.

"To suppress certain Spurious Sports," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Mr. George Greenwood and Mr. Corrie Grant; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 114.]

CLERKS OF THE PEACE AND COUNTY COUNCILS BILL.

"To amend the Law with regard to the appointment of Clerks of the Peace and County Councils," presented by Mr. Luttrell; supported by Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Sir John Kennaway, and Sir Francis Channing; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 115.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Housing of the Working Classes, to amend the Law of Rating, and to establish Fair Rent Courts," presented by Mr. Bowerman; supported by Mr. Alden, Mr. Bell, Sir John Bethell, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. Steadman, Mr. Thorne, and Mr. Wiles; to be read a second time upon Monday, 6th April, and to be printed. [Bill 116.]

PURITY OF MILK SUPPLIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To ensure the Purity ot Milk Supplies of the Rural and Urban Districts of Scotland," presented by Mr. Watt; to be read a second time upon Monday, 23rd March, and to be printed. [Bill 117.]

DIVORCE LAW AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

"To enable married persons whose wives or husbands have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, or are incurably insane, or who have been judicially separated for a period of five years and upwards, to obtain dissolution of their marriages," presented by Mr. Bottomley; supported by Mr. Walsh, Mr. Glover, Mr. Straus, Mr. Hugh Lea, Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Thorne, and Captain Kincaid-Smith; to be read a second time upon Friday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 118.]

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS FOR WINDING ENGINEMEN) BILL.

"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Acts, 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting the Hours of work of Colliery Winding Enginemen," presented by Mr. William Edwin Harvey; supported by Sir John Barlow, Sir Joseph Compton Rickett, Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Seddon, Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), Mr. Glover, Mr. William Johnson, Mr. Albert Stanley, Mr. Hall, Mr. James Haslam, and Mr. Ashton; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 10th March, and to be printed. [Bill 119.]

MONASTIC AND CONVENTUAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

MR. T. L. CORBETT (Down, N.) in asking leave to introduce a Bill to appoint a Commission to inquire as to the need for the inspection of monastic and conventual institutions, said that in deference to the Speaker's desire expressed in private, due, he believed, to the fact that this Bill was identical with the measure introduced last year, he did not propose to make any speech in support of it. He would simply ask for leave to introduce the Bill.

Motion made, and Question put, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to appoint Commissioners to inquire as to the need for the inspection of Monastic and Conventual Institutions."—(*Mr. T. L. Corbett.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 101; Noes, 151. (Division List No. 22.)

AYES.

Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.
Black, Arthur W.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bramsdon, T. A.
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Chamberlain, RtHn. J. A (Worc.
Clark, George Smith (Belfast, N.
Clough, William
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Darlymple, Viscount
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferguson, M. C. Munro
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gretton, John
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Henry, Charles S.
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N.
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jardine, Sir J.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kimber, Sir Henry
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lowe, Sir Francis William
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Micking, Major G.
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlebrook, William
Moore, William
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk Eye)
Percy, Earl
Perks, Robert William
Radford, G. H.
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robinson, S.
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford East)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. T. L. Corbett and Mr. Beaumont.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert Henry
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burke, E. Haviland-
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Crean, Eugene
Crosfield, A. H.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Dillon, John
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Ernest
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Grant, Corrie
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hayden, John Patrick
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hogan, Michael
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, Rt. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Machonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Meagher, Michael
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Nicholls, George
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon)
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Mussell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rose, Charles Day
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whiteley, Rt. Hn. G. (York, W. R
Wilkie, Alexander
Williamson, A.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Captain Donelan and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) [SALARIES, ETC.].

Resolution reported: "That, for carrying out the provisions of any Act of the present Session to encourage the formation of Small Agricultural Holdings in Scotland, it is expedient to authorise—(i.) the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of the salaries of the chairman and of each of the other members of the Land Court; (ii.) the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of: (a) The salaries and remuneration of the Agricultural Commissioners and other persons appointed or employed by them and by the Land Court, and the expenses incurred by the Land Court and the Agricultural Commissioners in the execution of their duties; (b) an annual sum not exceeding £85,000 for the use of the Agricultural Commissioners; (c) compensation in certain cases to members and officers of the Crofter's Commission."

Resolution agreed to.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1—

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I think this is a fitting opportunity for the House to concentrate its attention, not upon the general merits or demerits of this Bill, but upon Clause 1 of the Bill, which has the effect of extending to the whole of Scotland the particular legislation provided in 1886 for a part of Scotland which is relatively large in area but small in population, backward in agriculture, and has no pretence to rival more fortunately situated areas in other parts of the country as regards general industrial and social developments. I am one of those who think that the provisions embodied in this clause are a great test of the capacity of the present administration for dealing with questions of social reform. Questions of social reform are in all our thoughts, but he must indeed be a novice in these matters who thinks that they are easy of solution, that they do not require the most careful consideration and all that experience and all that theory can teach us, and who does not view with dismay those rash, but maybe well-intentioned legislators, who rush into a question affecting immense interests and vast bodies of our population without the smallest apparent regard for the responsibilities incumbent upon them. I do not think in the whole history of legislation by a responsible Government there has been anything ever done that was more rash, more ill-considered, and more obviously foolish than this attempt to apply to the whole of Scotland legislation which was applied for very special reasons to a part of Scotland and which was derived, not from Scottish tradition, history, law, or needs, but from an experiment which has been tried in Ireland alone of all the nations of the world, and has been found to be a failure. What is the history of the Crofters Act in Scotland, which Act this Bill proposes to extend from the mountains and moors and the storm-beaten islands of the north and north-western part of Scotland to the whole kingdom? In 1881 Mr. Gladstone found himself face to face with something in the nature of an agrarian revolution in Ireland. He had to deal with it rapidly, and the particular ethical difficulty which met him was, in Ireland as in the Highlands of Scotland, that the tenant and not the owner of the land provided the capital necessary for the cultivation of the land, and that the buildings and improvements had been made, not at the landlords', but at the tenants' expense. The result was that property had really been created by two people, but was vested only in one. That difficult state of things could only be dealt with in one of two ways. It could be dealt with either by establishing a system of dual ownership, or by establishing a system of single ownership, vesting both the improvements and the land in one ownership. In 1881, Mr. Gladstone adopted the first of these alternatives. At the time he was face to face with difficulties of almost unprecedented magnitude in the government of Ireland. There were men on both sides of the House, and many Irish Members sitting then as now, below the gangway, who said that the true solution was not to be found in the establishment of dual ownership, but in the establishment of a peasant proprietary, or a system by which, instead of having two owners, there should be one owner and that owner the man who had created the improvements on the land. In that view Mr. Bright and others strongly concurred. I believe that Mr. Gladstone himself held that theoretically the plan he adopted was one which in the end was not likely to succeed. But he had to face an immediate difficulty. He adopted the Act of 1881 as an interim arrangement, as a passing phase in land legislation which was to lead at no great length of time to a system of peasant ownership. I remember speeches of the present Duke of Devonshire in that sense, and I think it is not improbable that many statements by Mr. Gladstone can be found which support the view I have taken of the policy of the Government of that day. Time has shown that those who took that view took the correct view of the situation. The Lord Advocate has been apparently in communication with a particular official of the Irish Government. He wrote him a letter and got a letter in reply, which he read—an unusual proceeding, and I venture to think not a very dignified one—in which that particular Irish official said that good had been done by the Act of 1881. There are senses in which I think it is possible to maintain that much good was done by the Act of 1881, because the Government were face to face with a great agrarian revolution and the situation had to be dealt with. But I do not believe that even the particular official to whom the Lord Advocate referred would maintain that dual ownership was a better system than single ownership. To maintain that proposition would be to run counter to the best of Irish opinion and to the most matured judgment that has been formed about Irish affairs by those who are not Irishmen, but who have been responsible from time to time for Irish administration. The Secretary for Ireland invariably tells us that he welcomes the operation of the Land Purchase Act. He regrets every obstacle which financial difficulties threw in the way of that Act, and he looks forward to the completion of the policy inaugurated thirty or forty years ago, and promoted by the great Act passed by my right hon. friend the Member for Dover, as the greatest of all boons that could be given by the financial credit and power of this country to the Irish population. That is the history of the Act of 1881, as it applies to Ireland. What is the history of the Act of 1886, which applied the same system to the crofting areas in the Highlands and islands of Scotland? Did the authors of that measure say it was a plan obviously of general application which they desired to see widely extended, but which they would try experimentally in one corner of Great Britain? No, Sir; the authors of the Act of 1886 found themselves in precisely the same position as Mr. Gladstone found himself in in 1881. They had to deal with a condition of disorder. They had to deal with a system of land tenure in which, broadly speaking, the occupiers had made and the owners had not made the improvements on the soil; and they adopted in the face of the same difficulties the same solution that Mr. Gladstone adopted. The same results followed. I do not deny that, as a transition measure, the Act of 1886 may have given some benefit to the Highlands. It may have conduced to law and order, it may have prevented some few cases of injustice—I think very few were alleged—it may have given tenants security for future improvements, it may have helped them to expend money which otherwise they might have been afraid to spend lest their rents should be raised upon the improvements which they themselves had created. But surely every observation that is applicable to the great theatre of Ireland is applicable to the smaller theatre of the north and north-west of Scotland. On a miniature scale, the problem was the same in all its characteristics, and I have always thought that ultimately the same solution, and the same solution alone, would adequately meet the case. But when you take this legislation, which had its origin in Irish land revolution, which was supported by something in the nature of a small Highland revolution against the payment of rent, based upon the economic fact that one man owned the land and another made the improvements, and propose to extend it to a part of the country where there has never been an agrarian difficulty, where the tenants do not make the improvements, where not one of the original justifying conditions can be found to prevail, then you are turning topsy-turvy—you are making hay of all the best traditions of legislation, and I venture to say you are showing yourselves quite incapable of dealing with problems of great difficulty, involving the future application of capital to land and the future interests of agriculture. Unless you can show that in the Lowlands of Scotland conditions prevail which make the experiment tried in the Highlands applicable, it seems to me your whole policy is utterly and hopelessly without justification. We are constantly told by those who are defending this Bill that the experiment of the Crofters Act has been so successful in the Highlands of Scotland that we should be foolish indeed if we were not to take advantage of so admirable a system, and extend it to all other parts of the United Kingdom. I need hardly say that that argument equally applies to England, but I do not mean to dwell upon that point. But let as treat it now as a Scottish matter. I do not mean after the manner in which it is treated by the Treasury Bench. The Solicitor-General for Scotland says, "What have Englishmen got to do with this Bill? We are dealing with a peculiarly Scottish problem; let us deal with it in a peculiarly Scottish way." Yes, but this is not a Scottish way; it is an Irish way, and it is a discredited Irish way. And, really, that is not all. Land tenure is a very large and complicated subject, upon which experiments have been tried and different methods adopted in different countries with different historic pasts and different conditions. Is there one country in the civilised world where any attempt has been made to find fixity of tenure or security for tenants' capital on the plan which the Treasury Bench has now adopted? The Lord Advocate or the Secretary for Scotland last week, in the debate on this Bill, said that in Denmark the system was one of peasant proprietors, but there were other plans for giving fixity of tenure, but he did not tell us what those other plans may be. I do not remember any. But is there any example anywhere of this particular plan? Have any of the other countries whose prosperity we envy, and in some respects desire to copy, adopted this system? Is it to be found in Denmark? Is it to be found in Belgium? Is it to be found in France? I have never heard of any such plan. In the United States, I need hardly say that this plan would be scouted as the most grotesque travesty of land legislation which could possibly be conceived. Therefore, the Government have no example to go upon except the example of Ireland, which has already been abandoned, and the example of this small corner of Scotland—small in regard to wealth and population—where it is alleged the experiment has had immense success. I am sceptical about the immense success. I do not in the least deny that it was better to have some solution of an economic and of an ethical problem than no solution at all. In that sense I believe the Act was better than nothing; but when I am told that all the improvements which have happily taken place in the Highlands are due to the operation of the Crofters Act it is drawing a cheque upon my credulity which I must absolutely decline to honour. Am I wrong in saying that the total amount of rents valued under the Crofters Act is not much more than £65,000 a year? I think I am right in saying £65,000 a year is the total amount of rents which have been fixed by the Crofters Commission. But more than half that amount is poured from the Treasury every year into that small district in Scotland. If there has been, as there has been in some parts of the Highlands, a great augmentation of prosperity, do you not think that some credit might be allowed for the fact that this House has voted large sums of money and for the effect brought about by the expenditure of these sums every year? Do you not think something might be allowed for the improved means of communication, for the guaranteed railways, for the improved railways, for the telegraphic communication, for the harbour improvements, and the money which the Congested Districts Board has at its disposal to spend every year? This £35,000 a year is more than half the whole rent valued by the Crofters Commission. If the condition of a population, which has a sum of money amounting to more than half the total rents poured into the district, at the expense of the Lowlands, is not ameliorated, then I think we may despair of ever ameliorating anybody's condition. I do not believe that the slightest examination of what is happening under the Crofters Act will justify the very rosy view and sanguine estimate which the Government apply to it. In the eastern parts of the Highlands of Scotland where the population and the climate are more closely allied and have more in common with Aberdeenshire and other portions of the Lowlands, I do not believe that the improvement in the crofting area is a bit greater than the improvement in the non-crofting areas which adjoin it. In the growth in wages, the improvement in houses, the improvement in education and sanitary conditions, or by whatever test you like to apply to prosperity, I do not believe you will find this marked difference between the parts in the Eastern Highlands where the Crofters Acts apply and the other parts of the Eastern Highlands adjoining where the Crofters Acts do not apply. And when I turn to the west of Scotland, is that an area on which the Secretary for Scotland and the Government can look with unfeigned satisfaction? I am not going into the controversy which has been raised over the treatment of Lady Cathcart by the Government or Lady Cathcart's treatment of those occupying under her in the crofting districts of the Western Hebrides. But there is one fact connected with her estate which gives cause for the deepest anxiety. It appears that in the last twenty years the population in Barra has grown by more than one-third, and it has grown in a way painfully familiar to every student of the congested districts in the west of Ireland. It has not grown because intensive cultivation has added immensely to the productive capacity of the soil, nor because new sources of industry have added to the wealth of the people, but by the well-known reluctance of the children to leave the crofts of their fathers, so that they prefer subdividing to either migrating or emigrating. Now, love of home is a sentiment which we all in a measure share, but every man who knows the history of Ireland and every man who has the smallest acquaintance with these islands of Scotland, knows that of all the causes of starvation and misery in districts so little favoured by nature and situated under such inclement skies, none has been more effective and deadly in its operation than this growth of the population in an area incapable of sustaining it. That way poverty and misery inevitably lie, and I cannot discover that the Government have shown the smallest perception of the danger which, in spite of the Crofter Acts, is now threatening portions of the Western Highlands, or that they do otherwise than look with a kind of blind satisfaction upon these cases so big with the seeds of future miseries and destitution, and I fear even of future disorder. There is one more circumstance which cannot be left out of account. In contemplating the working of the Crofters Acts is it not true that a large number of the crofters greatly prefer being under the ordinary law to availing themselves of the privileges under the Crofters Acts, and these are often some of the most enterprising and vigorous of your crofting population? They greatly prefer being under the old terms with their landlords by which they can ask for assistance with capital and that co-operation to which they have been accustomed, and where the relations of landlord and tenant are really good and are certainly more conducive to the proper cultivation of the soil than anything you are likely to substitute. Therefore, I cannot admit that even in the districts where the Crofters Act has been a success, it is the kind of success claimed for it by the Government. It has proved a measure of advantage; it has produced a greater consideration for the law; it has in some cases helped improvement; but the idea that the Crofters Act has turned the Highlands and islands of Scotland into an agricultural garden is a pure vision that exists only in the minds of the Government and has no foundation in fact. Therefore, so far as the Highlands are concerned, there is no justification for an extension of the crofting law to other areas less suited to it and where dual ownership has not that ethical justification it may have had in the Highlands. Then I turn from the Highlands to ask what is the history of that part of the country to which you mean to apply this system of dual ownership. Has the agricultural history of the Lowlands of Scotland been a discreditable history? If anybody will take the trouble to read the history of the Lowlands of Scotland since the middle of the 18th century he will arrive at the conclusion that in no part of the world has there been a greater development in the science of agriculture; in no part of the world has the land produced more per acre of the staple crops, and produced them with greater success and by larger outlay of capital. You may say that may be correct as to the farmer and landowner, but how about the agricultural labourer? I venture to say you may search the world over and you will not find a more prosperous and a more independent body of men than the agricultural labourers in the Lowlands of Scotland. I am particularly acquainted with agriculture, as it is practised in the Lowlands, but I believe, with some slight modifications and alterations, the system prevailing there is the general system to be found over large areas in Scotland. And it is a system undoubtedly more beneficial for the agricultural labourer than the system which prevails in the Highlands, in Ireland, in England or Wales, or many parts of the Continent of Europe. I suppose the audience I am addressing is mainly Scottish and therefore acquainted with the system, but there may be some hon. Gentlemen present who do not know what that system is. There the contract between the farmer or the occupier and the labourer is annual generally, though sometimes it is for six months. The agricultural labourer does not usually move far from the district in which he was born and brought up and where his friends and family reside. He is within that district very movable. If he does not like one employer at the end of that term of contract he moves and enters the service of another. I do not believe in the subserviency of the agricultural labourer in any part of the United Kingdom, but to those who know the agricultural labourer to apply such a term to the agricultural labourer of Scotland is a ludicrous misapplication. During the year of the contract the agricultural labourer has a cottage in a place upon the farm steading, as we call it, conveniently situated for his work and he has it rent free. If he falls ill there is no diminution of his wages for six weeks. If he still remains ill after six weeks without being able to work he can retain his cottage rent free for the remainder of the year for which he has contracted to work. The wages are certainly above the average in other portions of the country, and in my own recollection the improvement in the houses of the agricultural labourers has been broadcast, and the whole character of the cottages in which they reside has entirely altered. Therefore, you have in the Lowlands of Scotland a system under which, as it seems to me, if you are to have hired labour on your land—and nobody doubts that it is an essential part of the agricultural system, though it may not be the main part—you are never likely to have it on a better plan and one more favourable to the independence, the security, and well-being of the class of agricultural labourer in whose interest you are chiefly concerned. There is no part of the habitable globe where larger sums have been spent by the owners of the soil upon buildings, cottages, draining, fences, and all the other necessary permanent equipment of a farm. Is that nothing? It is the main thing you have to look to, for agriculture differs from all other industries in this respect, that nobody makes a fortune by it. It has no great prizes. There is no prospect even of large interest on money expended. If, therefore, you want to get a great expenditure of capital, you will never get it by appealing to those motives which in other enterprises make men risk their fortunes. What are the Government doing? You have to deal with human nature as it is. What are the motives which induce men, whether on the Continent or in England, Scotland, or Ireland, to spend long hours of labour or vast sums of money, for no great remuneration, on the improvement of their land? It is the pride of possession, and it is the security. The owner of the land says, Both duty and pleasure, the responsibilities incident to my position, make it incumbent upon me to spend, even if unprofitably, money on the land I own. That motive has, in the south of Scotland more than anywhere else, induced landlords to expend vast sums of money. This Bill absolutely destroys that. The Government boast of destroying it. For they say to the landlords: You will be relieved of the vast expenditure you have hitherto undertaken. Are you going to substitute for the motive of ownership another motive which will induce the small occupiers to expend money and labour upon the holdings which they till? You refuse to do that. In Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, you will get men to work, with their wives and children, hours which would hardly meet the approval of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, in order that their small holdings should give them a living, and should give for their sons the same source of pride which they are to them. You refuse to appeal to that motive. Having destroyed the interest of the large owner, you refuse to create the small owner.

Having dried up one source of capital expenditure on the land, you proceed to dry up another. And you are doing this in a region of the country where there is no ground for drastic and risky remedies based upon the dangerous condition of the patient. The patient is flourishing. In the Lowlands of Scotland we have got through, without Government assistance, without vast sums of money spent by the Exchequer, a great agricultural crisis, without disorder, without discontent, and with less friction than has ever occurred in a great industry subjected to a tremendous and wholly unexpected strain. And this is the region where it is necessary to upset everything that at present exists, and to introduce into it a brand new importation from Ireland which has never been tried in any other part of the world, where, by the way, they have not been unduly reluctant to try land experiments. You are going to put the prosperous parts of Scotland under a bureaucratic heel in Edinburgh. A more foolish experiment has never been suggested by a responsible Government in this country. And this is a specimen of what we are to expect from this Administration in the way of social legislation. It is by this specimen of their ingenuity that we are to judge of the efforts they propose to make with regard to other great industries. It is in this spirit of rash and unauthorised experiment, of foolish obstinacy, that the Government, not content with introducing a Bill in 1906, not wisely and prudently anxious to bury it out of sight as decently as they can, reintroduce it practically without modification in 1907, spend the autumn in trying to flog up the flagging public opinion of Scotland, and, unmoved by argument, untouched by experience, incapable of learning even from their own friends in Scotland and England, reintroduce it for the third time, forgetting nothing and learning nothing, in 1908. An hon. Gentleman below the gangway, a supporter in a general way of the Government, informed us that the Bill was dead. The Bill may be dead; I daresay it is; but the example of the Bill lives. As a touchstone and test of the capacity of this Government to deal with difficult and complicated questions it is immortal. We shall not forget it; nobody will forget it. It is a test of their wisdom and knowledge, their power of learning from the experience of others, and their power of learning from their own colleagues on that bench. I occupied a quarter of the time on the debate the other day, and I regret to say that I have occupied a quarter of the time allowed to-day. But this first clause is worthy of many days debate. It stands as a permanent example of the ingenuity, the intelligence, and the caution of those who have devised it. Our duty is plain. It is to resist it now as we have resisted it before by every means in our power, and to save the most progressive parts of Scotland from the dead bureaucratic hand by which the right hon. Gentleman and his friends desire to strangle the greatest of our national industries.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I may, perhaps, be allowed to make a few observations in reply to the right hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the Committee. In discussing this Bill, ignoring differences of race, creed, religion, education and traditions, between the two countries, it is persistently stated that this measure is being founded on the model of Irish legislation, and that it is bound to lead to disaster to found a measure on that principle. But that assumes, in the first place, that the Land Act of 1881 is to be written down in history as a failure.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As a transition.

MR. SINCLAIR: As a failure. It may be a transition or not, but as a failure. Everybody knows what led to the supersession of the Land Act of 1881 by subsequent legislation. In the first place, the Act of 1881 did nothing more than this—rightly or wrongly, it applied to Ireland the principles which had characterised the land tenure and farming of the most prosperous agricultural portions of that country. For generations that system had lasted in the north of Ireland, where to this day it persists to a large extent, and is the foundation of its agricultural prosperity. For what it is worth, though it is not precisely the model which is adopted in this Bill, history does not condemn the

Ulster tenant right custom. That custom stands as a successful tenure which has led to agricultural progress and prosperity. The real truth is that in regard to the Act of 1881 it had to give way to the pressure which the right hon. Gentleman mentioned. There were purchase clauses in the Act which had the support of Mr. Bright and the Duke of Devonshire, but the right hon. Gentleman did not mention that he himself, supported by Lord George Hamilton, came down to this House in 1883, and insisted that those clauses in the Act of 1881 had not been properly developed nor given a fair chance; and it was he and his Government who, in 1885, and in later years, introduced the purchase principle which made it perfectly impossible for the tenure under the Act of 1881 to be left undisturbed in Ireland. Owing, therefore, to the right hon. Gentleman and his friends, the Act of 1881 had not a fair chance, because they attempted to run alongside of it the purchase system; so that we had pictures drawn for us of certain estates like the Dillon estate, where the tenant on one side of the line was paying rent under the Act of 1881, while a tenant on the other side of the line was paying a smaller rent under the operation of the right hon. Gentleman's purchase clauses, which gave him the fee simple of his holding. It is obvious to everybody that apart from the defects of the Act of 1881, what made that measure impossible was the attempt of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends, the owners of land in Ireland—who thought they were not being fairly treated under the system of hire—to get, in their pride of possession, the full value of their property.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I said nothing about pride of possession.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I do not say that the right hon. Gentleman said that, but it was the effect of the legislation of 1885 and of later years which made it impossible for the Act of 1881 to have a fair trial. Let me remind the right hon. Gentleman that the absurdity of applying this legislation to the rest of Scotland is not now suggested for the first time. When the Crofters Act was introduced the right hon. Gentleman himself clearly condemned it as a first step to the inevitable sequel of its application to other parts of Scotland. Twenty or more years ago a Bill was introduced into this House by a well-known representative of Scottish farmers, the late Mr. Barclay, with the object of applying fixity of tenure, and establishing a Land Court for the whole of Scotland. It is no new idea in Scotland, whatever it may be in this House. You will find that the Crofters Act did not deal with the same difficulties as those which obtained in Ireland, neither did it follow the same lines as the Irish legislation. There were rack rents, disorder, and evictions, but even with this similarity, there were radical and fundamental differences between the cases of Ireland and Scotland which preclude the supposition that they are exactly on the same footing, and that we are confronted by precisely the same difficulties. We have attempted in this Bill to meet what the right hon. Gentleman says is the ethical problem which he said confronted him, whether it is right and fair in the different conditions of the Lowlands to apply the same legislation as was adopted for the crofters' areas, where the small tenants had made their own improvements, and hand over the landlord's property in the shape of buildings and capital which he had put into the land. The question of whether it is just and fair is the question which we have endeavoured to meet in this Bill, and the right hon. Gentleman has never addressed himself to the point as to whether within the limits of this Bill a fair rent was to be fixed. We have made certain proposals under which we think this transaction can with fairness be carried out. We have submitted those proposals to the House, which has supported us by enormous majorities. The right hon. Gentleman specifically referred to the question of the success of the Crofters Act, but I will not labour that joint. Whatever the Crofters Act does, it certainly cannot alter the climate of the barren parts of Scotland, especially in the Western islands. No land tenure, no land laws can overcome the huge difficulties by which cultivators of land in those regions are confronted. It is no condemnation of cultivators in those regions if they cannot achieve the agricultural successes gained in the Lowlands. We have the problem of Vatersay and of Lews and other congested districts, and if the Crofters Act had contained powers for the creation of new holdings for devoting the land to the enlargement of holdings, so that they should become economic holdings, and for placing the crofters on the land, the House would have had a very different problem in Vatersay and Lews from what it is to-day. This Bill is not designed to supplement the Crofters Acts in these respects, but we trust it may. The right hon. Gentleman also alluded to another point. It has frequently been mentioned in this controversy as indicating the failure of the Crofters Act, namely, that a great number of the crofters under statutory limitations remain outside the Act. There are something like 12,000 or 13,000 crofters who would otherwise be entitled to have a fair rent fixed who remain outside the Act. But it is no condemnation of the Act that this should be the case, and it would be no condemnation of this Bill which we are now laying before the House if that also occurred under it. It is a desirable thing in all respects that the tenants should exercise their own will, and if their landlords come to an agreement with them, and they care to remain on the terms which existed before, or on terms altered by consent, we see no reason why they should not do so. They are allowed to do so under the Bill, and they are allowed to do so under the Crofters Act of 1886. That is one class of crofter that does not have a fair rent fixed; and there are other classes of people, including those in the twelve excluded parishes, the crofters who are leaseholders and who are not admitted to the Act of 1886, and the purchase tenants in the Highlands and the proprietors of small holdings. They are all outside the Act, and it is no condemnation of the Act to say that all those who are entitled to have a fair rent fixed have not availed themselves of that privilege. The right hon. Gentleman then travelled to the Lowlands, and there we met the ethical problem which he mentioned to us. This is only going one step further than the agricultural holdings legislation takes us at the present time. When the tenant leaves his holding you recognise that he has some capital in his holding, and the capital is assessed when he leaves his holding. In fact you have what is in essence a Land Court set up to assess the value of the capital which the tenant has sunk in the holding and which by law he is entitled to take away with him. We go one step further in the proposal which we make which applies solely to small holdings and say you ought to recognise that capital throughout the duration of a man's tenancy as well as at the end. The right hon. Gentleman did not attach much importance himself to the definition of "crofter" and "crofting parish." They are purely arbitrary, I might almost say artificial distinctions. There is no obvious line, no obvious feature in Scotland by which we can recognise the crofter region from that which is outside the crofter region. If the case is strong enough, surely we should not allow these distinctions to stand in the way. What are the distinctions between the Highlands and the Lowlands in Scotland? There may be some Members who would call Caithness a highland county. It is nothing whatever of the kind. Except in the extreme west it is as purely a lowland county as any other in Scotland. The truth is that the Lowlands of Scotland are a strip running up the eastern sea-board and broadening in the southern parts of Scotland, but in every county in Scotland there is highland as well as lowland. There is lowland in Caithness and in Wigtownshire. There are highlands in Sutherlandshire and in Berwickshire. There are ten counties in Scotland of which half the area is highland. Four of them are in the crofter region and six are in the non-crofter region. It is quite impossible then to draw a distinction of that kind between the highlands and the lowlands. Therefore, when we recognise the evils with which the Bill deals we are perfectly free to consider the question on its merits. The right hon. Gentleman has never indicated his view of what the remedy should be for the state of things we are obliged to consider. He suggests that the Lowlands are a very prosperous part of Scotland, and that the agricultural labourer and farm servant in that part of Scotland is an independent and self-respecting man. I know he is; but the difficulty is, and farmers will tell you that is the difficulty, that there are not enough of them, and farmers in every part of Scotland are at their wits' end for labour. The very fact that these men are such good men and are so highly paid increases the difficulty. Farmers are not able to employ them. Everything has not gone very well with the owners of land. There has been a great fall in rents. Will that be taken as an indication of the smiling prosperity of the Lothians? The great fall of rent that is common to the whole of Scotland cannot be traced in other countries which have had the greatest agricultural success. Canada, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, which are supplying us with perishable farm produce which we hope these small holdings will find success in producing, have suffered no fall of rents, and I cannot see that when there has been this great fall of rents, and there is this great scarcity of labour, and emigration, and land going out of cultivation, how the present condition of things can be defended as requiring no consideration and no remedy. The right hon. Gentleman says the patient is flourishing, but no one has been more eloquent than the right hon. Gentleman himself as to the necessity for some remedy for agricultural depression. This clause is founded upon Scottish experience, and it would be impossible for any Government to ignore Scottish experience when they came to deal with small holdings in Scotland. The largest experiment in small holdings in this kingdom has been the experiment under the Crofters Act—an experiment over a large area, and one which has met with a very large measure of success. How many families has it enabled to improve their holdings? How much capital has it not induced them to spend on inhospitable and difficult tracts of country? The real truth of it is that, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon said in the Second Reading debate on the Crofters Act of 1886, it would be much more proper to try this experiment on the more fertile region of the Lowlands. And after the experience we have had in the Highlands and the northern parts of Scotland, we have all the more confidence that we may adopt the suggestion which the right hon. Gentleman made. Surely, near the markets of the south, near great centres of population, where there is communication and transport, where there are large populations to feed, and where there is a much more genial climate and a much better soil, there is a more promising field for the application of this principle of security of tenure. The right hon. Gentleman questioned what I said the other day, and said that there was no way of giving security of tenure except by making the cultivator the owner of the soil. That is not so. If he will examine the history of agriculture in Denmark, he will find that the beginning of the agricultural prosperity of Denmark was under a system very analogous to the system which we have in this Bill. The peasant cultivators there were not in the first instance owners of their holdings, and it was only after some time, when they began to do well and accumulated wealth like other people, that it was possible, or that they desired, to become owners of the soil. And he will find also in various parts of England precisely similar tenures operating with success. I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman proposes as a remedy for this difficulty, and whether he would put forward purchase as his plan. We have no objection to purchase, or to people becoming owners of their own holdings. They are perfectly free to become owners of their holdings, and county councils of Scotland are perfectly free to assist them to become holders of their holdings, and what is more, there is nothing under our Bill to prevent a landlord disposing of his land as he chooses. He may equip it and let it or sell it for the purpose of small cultivation just as freely after the Bill has passed into law as he can at this moment. We interpose no obstacle, but the great obstacle in the way of any Government proposing a system founded on purchase is that the farm servants, labourers, and small holders who are likely to become cultivators of these holdings do not wish to purchase. There is no desire on their part to purchase. They have no means to purchase, and if the right hon. Gentleman will study the matter, as it has been my fate to do, so far as my opportunities have enabled me to do it, he will find that in England, for instance, men began with allotments and rose to be tenants of larger holdings, and then in time to come when they have capital like other people, if they wish it they put it in the purchase of the land themselves. But the beginning, the first rung of the ladder, is the tenancy system in some form or other. The Government wishing to make this a *bona fide* and honest attempt to meet the great evils which we are confronted with in the less populous country districts, seeing that the desire of the people generally, almost universally, is tenancy; seeing that it is only by that system that we can put it within their reach to put money into the land, to stock it, to till it and to use their experience in so doing, we have adopted the tenancy system. For my own part I cannot help believing, without exaggerating and without drawing deductions which are not warranted from crofter experience of this tenure, that this Bill has the prospect of bringing great benefits to the Lowlands of Scotland and to the country as a whole, and I would ask the Committee to bear in mind that there is a remarkable unanimity of opinion shown in this House and also outside in Scotland in favour of this view. I know we are not all agreed, and I am perfectly aware that there are exceptions on this side of the House; but I ask hon. Gentlemen to look back fairly at the history of any other legislative proposal which has been so long as this before the country and say if they can recollect a similar persistence and resolute unanimity in support of that measure. It would be a great pity if this opportunity were lost to Parliament to place this measure upon the Statute-book. Scotland will receive a serious blow if its wants are not met on this occasion.

MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said that he was glad to hear the Secretary for Scotland say he had not a rooted objection to purchase. Up till now he had been under the idea that he was very much opposed to it in any case. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted Denmark as an instance of the success of the tenancy system; but that was hardly fair, considering that in Denmark fifteen-sixteenths of the whole holdings belonged to the people who cultivated them. Again, in France, where small holdings had been a notorious success, ownership was practically the order of the day. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that nature had made a great difference between the conditions that prevailed in the north and in the south, and that it was not surprising that the people in the north could not do great things with their small holdings. That was the best part of their contention. Nature had made a great difference between the conditions of the north and south; but he did not think that it could be allowed that, because they could not level up the conditions of the north, they should level down the conditions of the south. The proposal to bring the conditions of the crofters into the entirely different area of the South of Scotland could only be justified by the success of the Crofter Acts in themselves and by seeing that the change would not do more harm than good. In the north the landlords had not spent money on repairs and on the equipment of their small holdings as the landlords in the south had done. So far he agreed that this fixity of tenure in the north had been advantageous, because it had allowed the tenants to spend their money without fear of losing it. So far, so good. But he was not so sure that the Crofter Acts were such an enormous success as had been usually maintained. It was frequently urged that the crofters had spent very large sums of their own money. It was said that they had spent £150,000 in the island of Skye, but he did not know whether the crofters on the mainland had spent all this money or anything approaching the amount which had been mentioned in the case of the islands. But in spite of the money which it was claimed the crofters had spent themselves, and the enormous sums which had been poured from the public purse into these districts, the fact remained that the crofters were, as a class, living in a condition of poverty and hardship greater than that of any other class in Scotland. And yet it was proposed to convert other classes living in the south in a much more prosperous way to the conditions in which these people lived. What were the conditions of the south? There they had the landlords carrying out all repairs and finding the equipment of these small farms. Why did the landlords do that? They had heard it constantly said that the landlords would go on doing this. Why should they? Why did they do it now? Was it for philanthropic motives alone? Were landlords so much greater philanthropists than other people that they did this? He thought the landlords in the

South of Scotland, like landlords in England, did the repairs and found the equipment on the farms because it was only in that way that they could retain their tenants and find new tenants when they wanted them. By one stroke they were going to remove the whole of that motive by giving a form of fixity of tenure which the landlord did not desire. What motive would he then have to continue to spend his money? He would not desire to keep a tenant, but to get the land back into his own hands if he could. They removed the motive for the expenditure of the landlord's money, and what did they put in its place? Only the expenditure of the tenant's money. So that they were going to take away from the tenant the advantage he had hitherto had of the expenditure of the landlord and throw upon him the burden of replacing the money out of his own pocket. This application of the crofter condition to the small tenants, who were in exactly the same position as small holders in England, had never been justified, and if they threw upon them the burden of equipment which was now carried by the landlord they would be doing them a very poor service.

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said that his right hon. friend had made some interesting admissions, but he still remained in the dark as to what the policy of the Government really was. No doubt the unanimity with which the Bill had been supported on that side of the House had been very remarkable, though the opposition in Scotland had been no less remarkable. But it was a great disadvantage that Scottish agriculture was not represented in that House. He could not rank as an authority. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that no landlord could know anything of agriculture or have any intimate acquaintance with the agricultural classes because he had never been a farm servant or a farmer. At any rate, he did not profess to be an agricultural authority, but he regretted that there was no direct agricultural representation in that House, otherwise the state of mind of the House towards the Bill might have been very different from what it had shown itself to be. One would almost imagine that if one was a landowner, or a farmer, or a farm servant, one was ignorant, that only an urban lawyer, or one who had no connection with the land whatever knew how to solve its problems. His right hon. friend had referred to the crofting statistics. There was a great deal in them which was applicable to the crofter districts, but very little which was applicable to the Lowland districts. The Member for Ross-shire had never concealed his opinion in season and out of season that the two cases should have been separated and dealt with separately. As to the Southern part of Scotland, the Member for West Fife had made the only speech that he had made since he came to Westminster in uttering a prayer to his right hon. friend and his supporters that well cultivated large farms should not be put into small holdings. He trusted the hon. Member would not be known as Single-speech Hope, but that he would pursue this matter, and perhaps it was one of those points upon which some impression might be made upon the Government. But, after all, this clause was the crux of the Bill, and they had been told that there could be no compromise upon it. He did not think there could be a compromise, apart from this clause, although there could be an agreement on a good many provisions in the Bill. The clause represented nominally an extension of the Crofters Act. What it really represented was a reversal of the whole Liberal land policy of the last twenty-five years, discarding all precedent and all authority and every kind of inquiry. The county councils had power to provide small occupying ownerships, but they had no compulsory powers; compulsory powers were not provided under the Bill, and that was one of the main reasons why county councils had been unable to set up occupying ownership, which was a form of tenure that was not to be permitted. The Leader of the Opposition had referred to this Bill as an example of the social work of the Government, a proposition which he did not accept, because he thought a great deal of the social work of the Government had been extraordinarily good. This Bill, however, was something rather apart from ordinary social work. He quite agreed that a great deal of the trouble they were confronted with now was owing to the neglect of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends to deal with the amendment of the Crofters Act. If the machinery had been strengthened and the powers of the Crofters Commission increased, they would not be confronted with this Nemesis as a consequence of a policy of neglect. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of dual ownership in Ireland and in the Highlands. That system was introduced under conditions of agrarian agitation in order to legalise custom and to allocate joint rights. It was the recognition of a natural division of property which existed at the time. In the Lowlands of Scotland there was very little division of property unrecognised by the Agricultural Acts, except in exceptional cases, and they had therefore to consider not only any likeness between the proposed Bill and the Acts passed for the Highlands and Ireland, but also the condition of the Lowlands, and the conditions prevailing in the Highlands and in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the Scottish agricultural system had broken down; but that statement was absurd, because the Scottish system, by virtue of its equipment was maintaining as large a population on the land as could be maintained upon it in a condition of economic prosperity, wherever the land was being properly cultivated.

MR. SINCLAIR: The hon. Member begs the whole question when he adds: "wherever the land is being properly cultivated."

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON maintained that there was no place in the world where the land was so well cultivated as in Scotland. He was aware that there were estates which were not properly kept up, and there were also bad tenants, but the agriculture of Scotland was the best in the world. A far larger proportion of England had been laid down to grass, whereas in Scotland the plough had been kept going at the owners' expense. Did the right hon. Gentleman imagine for a moment that he would succeed by adopting a proposal which withdrew the co-partner who provided four-fifths of the capital, namely, the owner? The owners had to find the capital for the equipment of the land because they were competing for tenants. He was at a loss to understand how the land was to maintain a larger population if they withdrew four-fifths of the working capital, which they must do under this Bill. Scottish agriculture never was doing better than it was at present. [AN HON. MEMBER: Question.] At any rate he was entitled to his own opinion. Although rents had fallen 35 per cent., Scottish agriculture had been able to withstand the severest crisis experienced during the last thirty years. The improved housing and methods of cultivation, the progress of scientific agriculture, the beginning of co-operation, and the adoption of more business-like methods of conducting operations must carry one to the same conclusion, that agriculture was never carried on in a more progressive spirit than at present. That was the system which it was proposed to upset by this extraordinary anachronism of a Scottish Small Landholders Bill. They had heard a good deal about free sale and no free sale. In Ireland free sale was established not only because there was partial custom there, but because in no other way could tenants have obtained compensation for their improvements. Therefore, free sale was a logical element in the Irish Land Bill. In the crofter districts there was practically no agriculture, and the compensation was on a smaller scale. Consequently compensation for improvements became a logical part of the Crofters Acts. The system now proposed without free sale would collapse. He acknowledged that in many ways the Crofters Acts had done good. He had not troubled the Committee with his own experience, but he would now state it. He was associated with a number of small tenants who could come under the Acts if they wished, but only one of them had done so, and his was the worst conducted holding on the estate. One of his tenants had provided his own equipment, and his was about the best holding in the property, and he was not under the Act. For the rest of his tenants he had equipped himself, and they had all elected to remain outside the Acts. The Douglas Commission, after a full inquiry, reported that the Crofter Acts, while they had done some good for housing in certain districts by giving fixity of tenure, had had no effect whatever upon agriculture. There was practically no agriculture in the Highland crofter districts before the Acts, and there was none now. The Lord Advocate had drawn a picture of 50,000 people settling under this Act upon the deer forests. A small portion of the deer forests of Scotland might be used for crofting purposes, and there was a large area which might be used for afforestation; but to lead the House to suppose that they would maintain 50,000 people was absurd. The deer forests were now maintaining as large a population as they could possibly maintain under any system short of afforestation of the land. The statement of the Lord Advocate on this point was a stretch of the imagination to which nobody who was acquainted with the area to which he referred would pay the least attention. To note the full significance of this clause they had to bear in mind the past Liberal policy in regard to land reform. Last year they amended the Agricultural Holdings Act. They had had proposals made by which local authorities should have compulsory powers to take land, and they were supported by the whole of the Liberal Party. Then they had an Amendment proposed for the Crofters Acts giving compulsory powers and improved machinery. This was followed by Sir George Trevelyan's Bill, which proposed to extend the Crofters Acts to analogous conditions. There was at the present time an inquiry going on into the registration of title to promote the cheap transfer of land. All this tended towards the consolidation and strengthening of the agricultural system of Scotland, the maintenance of an economic standard of responsibility of management, the securing of the investment of capital, and freedom of access to the land for those fit to occupy it. With a few amendments and extensions that policy would be complete and it would be easy to get rid of the owner. It might be public advantage to strengthen the number of owners, but if they eliminated the present owners they ought to set up some alternative system in their place, and that was exactly what this clause failed to do. The clause was a travesty on all past policy. It applied similar treatment to opposite conditions on the Highland line, and opposite treatment to similar conditions along the English border. It transferred the investments of one man to another without security and did not permit of further investment of capital in the soil. It also eliminated the owner's initiative in the investment of capital. It compelled the small tenant to find £5 of capital for every £1 he had to find before. There was no security for larger holdings, because there was no independent valuation for holdings or equipment liable to sub-division. It destroyed all security against loss, waste, and deterioration, because it set up no responsible management in the place of that which it destroyed, and it replaced the economic standard of value by the standard of rent which the small landholder could afford to pay. If he could not afford to pay within 5s. or 10s. an acre what the present tenant paid, that loss was to be met by the State or by the individual whose property was taken for the service of the small occupier. It provided limitations which would hamper intensive cultivation, and it bolstered up what his hon. friend the Member for Peeblesshire had called the poor landlord, who was unable to perform his duty in equipping the land, and the incompetent tenant. The clause had no money behind it, and without a very large allowance it would be inoperative or it would be destructive instead of being constructive. It was said that it was "so cheap." He thought that it would be found in working very expensive. No doubt it presented some element of cheapness. It was that element of cheapness which would render capital unobtainable afterwards. They were told that the tenant's pocket would be opened by this clause, because the tenant must open his pocket to find equipment. He had never found any evidence of the tenant being willing to open his pocket to find equipment. If it was not found by the tenant, it would have to be found by the State.

MR. SINCLAIR was understood to say that the tenant did so under present conditions.

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said that, under present conditions, the tenant did not open his pocket. Let them take the Highland area to which the right hon. Gentleman had referred. There he was able to equip his holding under security of tenure. He did not do it if he could get anyone else to do it for him. In the Highlands, where it had been the custom of the tenant to equip his holding, there was a much greater tendency on the part of the tenant to provide equipment than in the Lowlands where they had not been accustomed to do it. The Bill rendered the owner incapable of equipping, because no owner in his senses would equip under it. He said that advisedly, because he knew the conditions well. He himself equipped quite readily for his Highland tenants as co-proprietor, and he looked upon them and himself as part and parcel of the estate; but in regard to the small holdings under this Bill he would not think of equipping for tenants without an independent valuation in case of sub-division. The Government, therefore, fell between these two stools — they cut off the very man who hitherto had provided the equipment, and they did not provide it themselves. This clause had been founded rather, he thought, upon phrases and by turning a blind eye to facts. They were told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the clause represented rather a matter of method than of principle. It seemed to him odd that, if it was a matter of method, all expert advice should be ruled out in promoting the clause and in refusing any change with regard to it. Who knew how, when, or where, the clause originated? He would like to know what authority there was for it. What agricultural authority had ever been given for extending the crofter legislation to the rest of Scotland? They were told upstairs that it was proposed by a united Government. But they found that it was not a united Government that wished to extend it to the rest of Scotland. They found Lord Tweedmouth demonstrating unfavourably towards it, and they found Lord Elgin retaining his seat so firmly that wild horses would not draw him off it. They had heard a great deal about the advisability of co-operation, which was taken as the ideal in many industries. He would like to know what better example of co-operation there was than that which they found between landlord and tenant in Scotland. That had been one of the most highly effective forms of co-operation, and yet they would destroy the one industry where it was a natural growth. They wanted the free copartnery which this clause destroyed, and which enabled the man who found the bulk of the capital to associate himself with a competent man to manage the land. They could form nothing on this clause, because the only issue from it was agricultural deterioration, chaos of the agricultural system, and endless litigation between the nominal owner and the occupier. He had endeavoured to show how far they could go without destroying their agricultural system. He much regretted that he happened to be engaged in his municipal duties when the Bill which was drafted by the leading agriculturists of Scotland was before the House on Friday. That was a Bill which really represented the leading agricultural opinion of Scotland. It was not his Bill, but it was produced by the leading tenant farmers of the Highland Society, and the Chambers of Agriculture, and by other leading agriculturists on both sides of politics. He thought that on the lines of that Bill some compromise might be found. The right hon. Gentleman had recently developed a strange desire for compromise in another place, which seemed to be quite a new phase of Liberal policy. Much as he would like to see a good amendment of the Crofters Acts, he would like to see it on different lines from those proposed. It was upon very different lines from those they were asked to adopt that they would restore the population to the land, and do what they could to raise the *status* of the landward population.

Mr. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) said he understood that the proposition before the Committee was whether it was expedient to apply the principle of the Crofters Acts to the Lowlands of Scotland. The only part of the speech of the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs which appeared to him to be quite relevant to that proposition was where he endeavoured to show that the Crofters Acts had not been much of a success—he understood that the hon. Member admitted that they had had a qualified success—and, secondly, where he said that in the Lowlands of Scotland agriculture was as good as it could be. So far as the latter proposition was concerned, his view that that was an argument against all small holdings whatever, for if the condition now under the system of large farms was exactly what the hon.

Gentleman desired, the best in the world, and the most successful that anyone had ever seen, why agitate for any change? But it was within his recollection that the hon. Gentleman produced a Bill every year to have that system which he said was so good rectified. The fact was that the hon. Gentleman had always desired some change, and he understood until to-night that he had always desired small holdings. It seemed that his view had changed in that respect. The real question to which the House must direct its attention was—had the Crofters Acts been successful? In order to ascertain one must try to realise what was the condition of affairs in the Highlands of Scotland before 1886 when the Crofters Bill was introduced. Anyone who had read the history of the Highlands of Scotland in the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Dr. Norman McLeod, and Professor Blackie, all of whom had one view, knew what the Highlands had suffered before the passing of the Crofters Acts, and that the people were under a tyranny more oppressive than any tyranny in Europe. That was the view of those thoughtful Scotsmen. The crofters were the most patient race in the world, and for many a long year the tyranny was tolerated, but at last just before 1885 the crofters rose in flat rebellion. The last straw had been put on their backs, they refused to pay any rent, and when an officer of the law went with writs to eject them they deforced and assaulted him and refused to allow him to serve the writs. The Government sent a policeman to quell the disturbance; they apprehended the crofters by the batch; they brought them to Edinburgh, they put them on trial and sent them to prison, and all that had no effect whatever. The rebellion still continued; the crofters refused to pay rent or to leave their holdings. The Bill of 1886 was introduced. The simple principle of that Bill was that a Land Court should be established, consisting of impartial and skilful men, and that they should say what the rent should be, that it should be fair and that the small holders should never be ejected. That principle acted like magic. The rebellion was at once quelled; the agitation in the Highlands ceased, and the crofters from that day to this had been satisfied. The real test of the success of the Act was the contentment of the people on the land. The Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Member for Leith Burghs had both illustrated to the Committee how poorly off and how miserable the crofters were. He agreed that the land was the poorest in the world; that the crofters were confined to narrow spaces; that there was no room for extension of their holdings. True, the land they held would not produce wealth, but the people were happy because they were independent; and what more did the hon. Gentleman want? His point was that if that principle succeeded on that bare land, on that unfruitful soil, under those inclement skies, and if it had quelled a rebellion and rendered the people contented, the onus lay on the Gentlemen opposite to prove that these results would not follow if the system were applied to the whole of the rest of Scotland. That was really the whole case. Notwithstanding the series of propositions of which they had heard so much from the hon. Member for Leith during the past six months, he wanted an answer to the question: if a fair rent, fixed by a Land Court, succeeded on poor soil, why should it not succeed on good soil? He knew that hon. Members would answer: "Oh! the conditions were very different;" and they would talk about climate and soil; but again he asked, if the system succeeded on a bad soil and under bad climatic conditions, why should it not succeed with a good soil and under better climatic conditions? He asked hon. Gentlemen who had travelled in the Highlands to contrast the buildings that existed there twenty years ago and now. Formerly the crofter's house was a building a few yards long, in one end of which the crofter and his family lived and slept, and in the other the cows, pigs, and other animals were huddled. The building was put up by the crofter and his wife, and the walls consisted of stones fixed together with mud, and the whole was not worth half a sovereign. Hon. Gentlemen told them that the Crofters' Act was passed to protect this building, which was not worth half a sovereign, and asked why not give the crofter the same tenure as the ordinary Lowland farmer got? That was not the reason at all. The reason was that the only way independence could be given to the crofter was to give him security of tenure. Was it the case, however, that in the Lowlands the landlord always equipped his farms and supplied the buildings at his own expense ? He did not think that that was so when the case was properly understood. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs had spoken only of the case of the large landed proprietors. He knew a good many landed proprietors in Scotland who were not the best judges of what was good for their tenants. It was not the case that the landlords always paid for new buildings, but leased. If they erected the new buildings they charged the tenant 6 per cent. interest on the cost and could borrow the money from the Public Works Loan Commissioners at 3½ per cent. Moreover, when the lease came to an end the value of the improvements was included in the rent under the next lease. A landlord might get a small rent in proportion to the buildings on the farm, but the rent would be much less if the buildings were not in repair. However, that part of the argument was not quite so important as the other. With a view to prove that the Crofters Act was not successful, the right hon. Gentleman had referred to the agitation that was at present going on in the Island of Barra. He knew something of that matter ; and he would like the Committee to know what the real facts of the case were. Fifty years ago the Island of Barra, some fifty miles in length, was entirely covered with small holdings. Adjacent to the Island of Barra—only a couple of miles away—was the Island of Vatersay, which was occupied by only one grazing tenant. Fifty years ago Vatersay was covered with small holders who were evicted from their holdings and the houses which they themselves had built. These took refuge on the extreme end of Barra. They were there not as small holders in the ordinary sense ; they were not crofters but cottars, who made their living mostly by fishing ; they had no land of their own. They were squatters, but never with the consent of the landlord, and now that part of Barra was congested to a great extent. In 1883 the Deer Forest Commission scheduled the Island of Vatersay for the purpose of providing small holdings to crofters, but the landlord refused to divide it. When the County Councils and Parish Councils Bill was passed in 1892 the Barra parish council petitioned Lady Cathcart to divide Vatersay into small holdings. She refused. Then the parish council petitioned the county council of Inverness to create small holdings in Vatersay compulsorily, which they had the power to do. The county council sent down a committee to make inquiry on the spot. That committee stayed nine days on the Islands and reported to the county council that the land on Vatersay was suitable for small holdings and ought to be made available. The county council of Inverness, however, refused to put into operation their own committee's report. That was an object lesson to those who declared that the crofters were themselves to blame. These people had no place to make a living out of the land, and although their own parish council and the county council committee recommended that small holdings should be provided for them on the Island of Vatersay, the landlord, supported by the county council of Inverness, refused to give them. Could anyone wonder that the people in the Highlands looked with suspicion on the action of the county councils in Scotland ? Would anyone wonder, when the full facts were before the House of Commons, that they who represented Scottish constituencies should oppose any suggestion that the powers proposed to be given to the Agricultural Commission under this Bill should be taken out of their hands and put into the hands of the county councils ? The real argument against Clause 1 had not been stated in the House, but it had been stated in another place and in Scotland by Lord Lansdowne. Lord Lansdowne said that his real objection to Clause 1, which was the essence of the Bill, was that it took from the landlord the precious power of being able to guide the destinies of his estate. He agreed ; but he would observe that the estate had no destiny ; it was the people on the estate that had a destiny, and it was their destiny that the landlord had in his power. He agreed that where they had a just and generous landlord like Lord Lansdowne, that might be the best form of government of an estate, just as it was conceivable that the best form of government of a country might be that of an all-wise autocracy. But Lord Lansdowne claimed that power not only for himself, but for all landlords.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Lord Lansdowne never objected to compulsory purchase. What he did say was that while you left the estate to the landlord he ought to be allowed to guide it.

MR. A. DEWAR said he admitted that and would deal with it in a moment. He was only dealing in the meantime with the question as to whether it was a wise and prudent thing to leave in the hands of one man the right to control the destinies of another man. Lord Lansdowne claimed that power not only for the good but for the bad landlords. Was any man who had sufficient money to buy an estate to have the right to guide the destinies of the people he found on that estate? He did not think that that was a wise power for a man to possess, and if it could be got rid of with justice it had better go. The slave holders of old used the same argument. They pointed to the plantations and to the happy and prosperous negroes upon them, and said: "We guide their destinies; they cannot do it themselves." That argument took in many good people, even Mr. Gladstone himself. For a long time it was believed to be the only possible way, until ultimately it was realised that both the slave and the slave owner were better without a system of slavery, and it was done away with. The Leader of the Opposition had said that what the Bill proposed could not be done justly, and that it was confiscation to take this right away from the landlord without payment. He thought not. It was the right and duty of the State to regulate all private rights in the public interest. He said all private rights, and he thought our Statutes were an illustration of that, because they were in many cases an invasion of private rights in the public interest. He might instance the Factory Acts. A man took a piece of land and built a factory on it and thought he could carry on work there as he chose, but along came the inspector who said: "Unless you spend £1,000 on proper ventilation or proper heating, or in some other way, we shall close your factory." Did the right hon. Gentleman contend that the proprietor of the factory had any right to say: "If you interfere, buy my factory?" Or they might take the case of a coalfield. A man bought a coalfield and thought it was his individual right to work that mine as he pleased, but an inspector came along and said: "Unless you spend £10,000 in making an escape shaft we shall close your pit." There were many similar instances. There was the case even of the cabman who was bound to take a fare a certain distance for a shilling. Pursuing the right hon. Gentleman's argument, had not any individual a right to buy a cab and charge what he pleased? But in the interests of the public he was limited in his charges. Was it to be said, however, that a man who bought a parish or a county, and sometimes acquired it in a disreputable way, could exercise his terrific power for good and evil uncontrolled? Had he a right to say, "Buy my parish or my county, or I will do as I choose?" Any business man could give many illustrations of the kind he had brought forward. The right hon. Gentleman had said that this policy of the Government would not cure depopulation; but that depended upon how one looked upon it. Those who had had to consider why the labouring population in the country districts left the land gave different reasons. One said because of free trade; another, that wages had fallen; a third, that prices had risen; while yet another quoted the attractions of the town and of the public-houses and the beer-houses and so on. His answer to that was that the blacksmith usually was a man who had bought a stake in the country, and he was never attracted by the glare in the towns. Who were attracted by it? It was usually the labouring man who left the farm to better himself. It meant that he was tired of earning £1 a week and of not being his own master. In view of the education now given nobody could believe that any one set of men were born to remain in a sphere out of which they could not lift themselves. Under the circumstances the man became dissatisfied with his surroundings. Moreover, the man who left the country and came back to the village afterwards, although he might have only a humble shop in a back street in town, was another man, and encouraged the others to go to towns and try their luck, and everybody knew how often their luck failed them. The explanation of why men went to the towns was that they were given no inducements to remain in the country. If the House were going to solve this question they would have to look at it from the labourer's point of view, because it was a labourer's question. He acknowledged how courteous their opponents had been in regard to these matters and he knew that they felt keenly, but he thought that they had looked at the problem too much from the landlord's point of view. He did not think it probable that they knew what was passing in the agricultural labourer's mind. If it was a desire to better himself he thought they would agree that it was to better himself in his particular line. What did he want? A little bit of a farm; he wanted not only a place to live in but a home. They could not give him a home without security of tenure, and it was not a home if he was only to spend a few years in it, even if they gave him a nineteen or thirty-five years' lease. It was only a home when it was one upon which he could spend his health and strength, live his life, and form a refuge for his old age. The second thing he wanted was for some one to say what was a fair rent, and the third thing, which would get the best out of him, was the right to transmit to his children. The right hon. Gentleman might not think of it, but the very same instinct which induced the wealthy man to create an entail upon his son was in the working man, who also thought that his family should succeed him. If they were to make the best of him let them look at the matter from his point of view and give him these three things which he asked or rather which they asked on his behalf. He was convinced that it would do him good and the community and landlord no harm at all.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he was too conscious of having occupied the time of the Committee for an undue period to make another lengthy speech, but he wished to deal with the particular issue raised by the hon. Member for South Edinburgh. He did not think that in the latter part of his speech the hon. Gentleman had taken sufficient account of the arguments which he brought forward from their point of view, which was precisely the same as the hon. Member's except that he pointed out that if they were to enable a man to take an interest in the development of his property and give him the power of entailing it they ought to give him a freehold. But he would not occupy the Committee on the broad issue, and if the hon. Gentleman read what he said, he would see that he pointed out that the motive which had been considered the strongest in every country in the world was the motive of ownership, whether small or large. The hon. Gentleman had attacked him for considering this matter from the landlords' point of view, and for claiming for them immunities from the obligations which were cast upon other citizens, but he had not done so. The hon. Member had said that the factory owner could not use his factory as he liked, because the inspector came in and saw that his machinery was guarded and that in other respects the Factory Acts were carried out. For what reason? In order to look after the health and safety of our fellow subjects. Who asked immunity for the landlord or anybody else if similar safeguards were demanded in his case? They might multiply inspectors and the safeguards in regard to life and health and no objection would be raised by anybody, certainly not by him. Then the hon. Gentleman had said that a man could not manage his coal-mine as he liked; the inspector came in and said he must do this or that. But that was for the safety of the coal-miners. What was the analogy between that and a landed estate? The hon. Gentleman seemed to think that a man with landed estate held the fortunes of every person on that estate in the power of his hand. What justification was there for thinking that? He could understand that allegation being made against an employer of labour, because he had it in his power to dismiss at a week's notice or less the great majority of his employees. But the landed proprietor was no employer of the people who lived upon his estate and had absolutely no power over them at all. Let the Committee take the case of the unhappy Lowland lairds of which he was an unhappy specimen. What power had he over the people employed on the farms on his property? Did he choose them, employ them, settle their wages or their tenure of residence on the land? The person who employed them was the farmer, he engaged them, paid them their wages, and dismissed them. What had he to do with it? What had the landlord got to do with the fate and fortunes of nine-tenths of the persons who lived on his estate when it was let as it often was to other occupiers? The hon. Member had taken a most fantastic view of the powers of a landlord. Let them control those powers as much as they liked within proper limits, but all he pleaded for—and he was sure he was not pleading a selfish or a foolish cause—was that in the case of land, just as when a man had a factory, he should be allowed to use it to the best of his ability for the objects with which he was concerned, subject to what the law allowed and laid down with regard to his rights and duties towards others whom he employed. What hon. Gentlemen wished to say to the landlord by this Bill was: "You happen to own an estate, we are going to choose your tenant for you and settle the terms under which he will be your tenant; we are going to take away all your motives for assisting him and forming friendly relationships." All that was to be taken away. What would hon. Members say if that were taken away in the case of the employer of labour? A man built a factory and spent a large sum of money in fitting it up, just as the landlord expended a considerable amount on buildings, drains, labourers' cottages, and so forth on his farms. Would hon. Members come down and say: "You have no right to control the fortunes of your factory in this way, we propose to manage it, we propose to judge the kind of output there is going to be, and the kind of cottages you build in the neighbourhood of the factory, because we think that everybody employed in a factory should have a permanent home and be able to leave it to his son. We therefore, propose to take in hand these buildings which we say everybody has a right to and which a man may send on to his son." What would hon. Gentlemen opposite think of that? In the country as well as in the towns, in the Highlands as well as in the Lowlands, there was a mutual interdependence of one class upon the other. They could not have the isolated units of which the hon. Member dreamt. The idea that the power which mutual relationship always gave between the employer and the employed, between the landlord and the tenant, could always be abused either in industry or agriculture was wrong, and he maintained that there was no occupation in which it was less abused than in agriculture, and in which the hardships of competition were less felt than among the various classes concerned. There was no industry in which more friendly feelings obtained among all those concerned in it; and the idea that there was some special tyranny exercised by the landlord over those who were brought into relations with him, and that they were controlled in the preposterous manner suggested in the Bill, was a dream of the hon. Member. If they tried to prevent one class of the community from having an interest in the fortunes of another class they would reduce isolated communities to a state consistent only with savage life, and their scheme would have no relation to the actual facts of existence in which men met for common objects and worked together for that production in which landlord and tenant, employers and employed, were all equally concerned and on which all equally depended.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said he was rather surprised that any Member of this Committee should have had the idea that the farm servants of Scotland were slaves like those who used to work on the plantations.

MR. A. DEWAR said he did not say that. What he said was that the landlords claiming the rights they did over their tenants were claiming the same rights as the slave owners.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY said that all he could say was that every labourer employed on the land in Scotland was subject to exactly the same conditions as the labourer employed in any other part of the United Kingdom. No doubt if he had a good berth and was unfortunate enough to lose it, it would be very inconvenient to him, but that was the first time he had ever heard of the proposition, which he did not think the hon. Member could carry through, that a man under no circumstances whatsoever was ever to get notice to quit or to be sent away. If the hon. Member carried that out in his own business or occupation he might find his business would not progress very greatly. The argument that a landlord had no right to manage his own property came very strangely from the Liberal Benches. The argument which had always been used by the Party opposite, whenever complaint was made that agriculture in this country was not in a prosperous condition, was that the landlords and farmers did not adopt business methods. The argument had hitherto been that if a man found his occupation was not profitable he was a fool not to turn his capital and machinery to some other which did pay. If landlords found large holdings pay—or to take the illustration of the Prime Minister, of the deer forests which were said to lead to the depopulation of the land—hon. Gentlemen opposite should be the last to object, because their argument had always been if a man's occupation did not pay he should turn his energies into another channel. The hon. Member in the latter part of his speech had spoken of the terrible condition of Scotland before the passing of the Crofters Acts, and had given very excellent reasons why the Crofters Acts should be passed for the crofting districts. Those counties were in a state of revolt, and something had to be done. But did the hon. Gentleman suggest that that was the condition all over Scotland? Of course it was not, and there was not the same need or demand for extending the Crofters Acts to the whole of Scotland as he had suggested. But to prove his case the hon. Gentleman ought to have gone further and given strong evidence as to the good which had been effected by those Acts in the districts for which they were passed. It was true there was now content among the people who in the past feared to be evicted, and no doubt there had been reductions of rent in certain counties. But he did not know that the economic condition of the crofting country had improved to such a great extent as the hon. Gentleman would have the Committee believe. There was still a great amount of distress in the crofting districts, and many families were living in buildings which would not be passed by a sanitary inspector in the Lowlands. In addition to that, he believed, that in the crofting districts, in spite of fresh dwellings having been built and facilities given, the population had increased to a very small extent, if at all. No proof had been given that the Crofters Acts had brought about a good state of affairs in the crofting counties. They had not encouraged people to go back to the land, nor resulted in suitable buildings, [or in increased [cultivation of the soil. There was also the further fact mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition that a large sum of money had been annually spent among a population not large. £35,000 a year had been spent, and if the amount was distributed even by a Government Department it would be a strange thing if some people did not get some little benefit from it. The whole proceedings relating to this Bill were the most wonderful he had ever read or heard of. First, there was the spectacle of the Prime Minister denouncing the House of Lords because of their action when the Bill was before them last year. Then during the recess, when many people expected a visit to Scotland from the Minister for Agriculture, and to have some explanations and reasons for the Bill of which they knew nothing, the noble Lord informed the Chamber of Agriculture which was against the Bill that he could not accept the invitation, to go to Scotland and address them on this topic. They could not help thinking then, knowing the kindness of the noble Lord and his propensity for not creating a jarring note at what would otherwise have been a convivial reunion by saying something which would not please the Chamber of Agriculture, that he had been told by the Government he had better keep away. Having thus chained and muzzled the noble Lord, the Government, however, let loose the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was allowed to go to Scotland and speak on this Bill at Perth, where he gave the case completely away, so far as the Government were concerned. The noble Lord had said that he much preferred the working of the English Bill. The Government in the future would no doubt learn wisdom and muzzle all noble Lords. In addition to the argument of the success of the Crofters Act, it was said that the people of Scotland wanted the Bill, and, undoubtedly, a majority of the Members representing Scotland were in favour of it, but whether their constituents were was quite another matter. His own view was that if this Bill became law it would be a mistake, as those on the Liberal Benches who represented Scottish constituencies would learn to their cost. He had no doubt that hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies did not differ from the rest of them and that they sometimes spoke in glowing terms about the advantage of the Bill, without altogether explaining its disadvantages. Undoubtedly, if the Bill became law, a good many people in Scotland would be very greatly disappointed and would suffer a good many disadvantages. He would leave out the question of the landlords altogether, because they had heard a good deal of talk about them already. The Secretary for Scotland appeared to think that the great body of farmers of Scotland were in favour of the Bill. It was the first he had heard of it. He would have thought that the vast majority of them were bitterly opposed to it, seeing that they would be liable to have part of their farms taken away from them, and to be ejected from their homes without notice by the Land Commissioners. Then they came to the farmers, who were to be particularly benefited by the clause—the farmers with under 50 acres of land. He was very doubtful, if the Bill became law, whether their position would be materially improved. In his opinion, in many cases they would be direct losers. A man would naturally think, if the clause were passed, that he would be able to go to the Land Court and get a reduction of rent. In the first place, that reduction was purely problematic, and, secondly, in a great many cases, he might not get a reduction at all, and in certain cases he might even get his rent increased. What advantage could he get which he had not at the present time? By the Act of 1906, he had already practically got security of tenure. That Act made it extremely difficult for a hard-hearted landlord to turn his estate into a game preserve, for he had to pay high compensation for unreasonable disturbance. The tenant had been given freedom of cultivation and full claim for compensation for game. He did not see what further benefits he could have, unless he was going to get a large reduction of rent. It was, however, extremely problematic that he would get any reduction if the clause was passed. On the other hand, he would get a good many disadvantages. When the Bill was passed, and the Crofter Acts were applied to the Lowlands, the landlord would say to his tenant: "You have got security of tenure and everything else on which you have set your hearts, and which your Liberal representatives have told you will make you a free and independent man. Under these circumstances, you will do all the repairs on the farm." Then, if a bad year occurred and the man lost the greater part of his crop, there would be no going to the landlord and trying to get a reduction of rent, which he believed had in many cases been granted during the past recess. There were these disadvantages even to the tenants who were going to receive the greatest benefits. In his opinion, he would merely get a little more security of tenure, and at the same time he would suffer the disadvantage of never getting any help from his landlord. There was, however, another class of people, the people whom the Government had told that if they once got a small holding they would be different men and able to walk down the village street with high heads. There would in one or two years' time be failures among those men; and, when they had lost their little capital, they would not be best pleased with those hon. Members who had recommended them thus to invest their savings. There would not, even among the successful applicants, be contentment. There would be a repetition of what had occurred over and over again in regard to land legislation in Ireland. They would not be merely unprosperous, but they would be working out a miserable livelihood by excessive toil, far harder than they would have as labourers; and they would demand fresh Land Courts, fresh reductions of rent, and fresh alterations in the law. The Government, by the Bill, would inflict a grievous harm on every single tenant who farmed over 150 acres of land. They would create a feeling of insecurity and stop two classes of men who had expended money on agriculture in the past—viz., the landlord and the big farmer—from doing so in the future. That would mean less employment and a great loss to agriculture. He believed that the Government were flying directly in the face of all economic law. Although in certain districts, with milk raising and intensive cultivation, the holdings might answer, the main crops of British agriculture must be corn-growing and stock-raising; and he did not believe that these men in small holdings, even with security of tenure, could compete with the stock-raising and wheat producing countries of the world, with all their latest machinery and big herds of cattle. He believed that in many cases these men were bound to fail, and that those hon. Members who had encouraged them to undertake an industry not economically sound would find that there would be a great many complaints against them.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said he was not alone among the representatives of the crofting districts in feeling that they were running a very great risk in reference to this particular clause. He was glad no one had denied that the Crofter Acts had done good for Scotland, but they had been unceasingly agitating and urging for amendments in the Acts. Some of those amendments they would perhaps get under the Bill, and some of them they might not possibly get. The representatives of the crofting districts felt far more deeply in this matter than those hon. Members who looked at it from a theoretical or political point of view. They had been looking forward for many a long day to an amendment of the Crofter Acts, and, whilst they would be the last in the world to refuse any rights to their friends in the South, they thought they were deserving of special treatment and consideration in regard to this matter. There were, he knew, several hon. Members who took the same view as he did. It seemed to him, especially from the speech of the Lord Advocate the other night, that the Crofting Act had not been altogether the success which was maintained for it. It had not done everything to settle the land question. There were many important matters which required urgent attention at the hands of the Government, notably of all the cottars question. He claimed equal knowledge with most people as to the views of the people in the Lowlands. He was ready to admit that the Leader of the Opposition had given a fair and accurate description of an agricultural labourer in the South of Scotland, but he did not think the inference he had drawn was altogether a fair one. He said that the labourer there demanded no alteration in his lot and was perfectly content. He (Mr. Wason) knew of his own knowledge that many of the men did demand an alteration. What they wanted above all things was a small bit of land which they could call their own, so that they would not be driven hither and thither at the mercy perhaps of some particular farmer. They wanted a piece of land which they could cultivate in their hours of leisure. It would be greatly to their advantage if they had more hours of leisure and more opportunity of spending time in their own homes. At the same time, of course, advantage would accrue to the farmer, because he would not have to pay their wages. Every hon. Member from Scotland to whom he had spoken was entirely of opinion that unless in the South they started this land question from the villages and got people to start from there, there would be great difficulty in working the Bill and in getting suitable people on the land. If those people were to be barred from obtaining and cultivating holdings, unless they were going to give up their existing means of employment, the Bill would be a bitter disappointment to the whole of the Lowlands, and to all those people who were now looking forward to some chance of prosperity and a greater amount of happiness than they had had in the past. The right hon. Gentleman had sketched quite fairly the farm labourer, but his sketch was nothing like what it ought to be. If he had a better chance given him in life, there would not be on the labourer's part the same desire to emigrate. They were in the North of Scotland exceedingly anxious about the Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking the other day, said that the Government were prepared to accept reasonable Amendments, and, he supposed, a fair compromise; and the Secretary for Scotland adopted a similar attitude. If there ever had been an occasion when a compromise was necessary it was on a Bill of this sort. He did not take the same view of the landlords of Scotland as did the Secretary for Scotland. His continual argument had been that landlords and tenants must work hand in hand, and if the landlords did not co-operate with the tenant land reform would be a failure. But the landlord had never accepted the Crofter Acts, at least in his constituency. In Orkney and Shetland they had never been content with the Crofter Acts, and had done their best to drive the men out of the benefits of the Acts, and to become again landlords' men. If ever there was a case for a compromise this was one. A Frenchman said the lion was a most mischievous animal, that when it was attacked it defended itself. The landlords were defending themselves in every way they could, and in countless ways the people were suffering from their hostility. He thought that if the Government could obtain peace with honour by way of a compromise they would be wise to do so. He could not forget a speech made when the Liberal Party was not strong, and had only a small representation in this House. He remembered the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaking in Inverness and saying that he was authorised to speak for the Liberal Party, and advocating the extension of the Crofter Acts to places where similar conditions obtained. The Government would have been wise to have stopped there, but this Bill went far beyond that. What was wanted was an elastic Bill, which this was not. The proposal as it stood would injure the rights of the people, especially in the South of Scotland, where land ran up to as much as £5 an acre rental. A man with 50 acres might pay a rental of £200 or £300 a year, and this Bill stereotyped him there for all time, whilst at the same time there were men near by who only wanted an acre or two of their own on which to earn a living. In other parts of the same country there were vast tracts of land which also would not come under the Bill. Looking across to the hills from the back of his own house he could see thousands of acres of land on which in past times there were a good many homesteads, but which now were nothing but a gigantic sheep ranch which supported a few shepherds.

AN HON. MEMBER: That is free trade.

*MR. CATHCART WASON said it was not free trade, but landlords and landlordism. That was what they wanted to alter and so make it easier for a man to earn a living. What was wanted was an amendment of the Crofters Acts and a Land Court free and unrestricted in its operation. He would for his own part be satisfied, rather than to get nothing, with a Land Court restricted in its operations. He would be content with a Land Court with power to acquire land on bankrupt estates, trust estates, and corporation lands in different parts of Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman opposite and the hon. Member for Leith Burghs talked of landlords as if they were angels, all desirous of co-operating with the tenants and doing the best they could; but that was a fanciful picture. That there were such landlords he did not deny. Many of them sat in this House. It was only the landlord of that kind that could. It was the bad landlords of Scotland that had caused this desire from one end of the country to the other. He knew that compromise was not the doctrine to preach on this occasion. He knew it was considered best to nail one's colours to the mast and go down with all the glory of war, but he did not want to go down. He wanted to go back to his constituents and say: "Look at what the Government have done for you." The people in Scotland wanted the Government to fulfil the promises they had made. In view of this question affecting as it did the whole of Scotland, in view of the hostile attitude many of the landlords had taken up upon it, he certainly trusted that although this Chamber was not permitted to propose any compromise wiser counsels would prevail when the Bill reached another place, and that hon. Members would not again have to go back to their constituents on the question of land reform.

*Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.) said that they listened now, as they had listened in Committee, with the greatest interest to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland while he smote this Bill hip and thigh and said it did not fulfil the pledges of the Government. He thought the Secretary for Scotland must have been asleep during the interval between this and the discussion in Grand Committee. If the right hon. Gentleman had not been asleep, he had, as the Leader of the Opposition had stated, forgotten nothing and had feared nothing. He had taken as much advantage as possible of those meetings which had been arranged for him with so much skill by the hon. Member opposite who had been described as holding the political destinies of Scotland in his hand, instead of availing himself of the plentiful and experienced information which was also to his hand. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs, who had made such an exhaustive criticism on this Bill, had said he was not a man of experience; but who did not know that the hon. Member was a good and generous landlord, and did his duty? In addition to the hon. Member there were half a dozen of the Cabinet who were opposed to this Bill. Lord Tweedmouth did not hesitate to pour his contempt upon it. Lord Elgin, whose silence was more eloquent than speech, refused to be drawn into giving any opinion upon it. Two very respected Members of the Liberal Party in Scotland Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael and Dr. Douglas had made inquiries which should have been made by the Government, preliminary to this or any other Bill. They had taken upon themselves as a private duty the labour that should have been the duty of the Government, and with remarkable skill had formed a Committee to inquire into the subject. The Committee include five of the very same gentlemen who had been selected by the Secretary for Scotland for their ability, integrity, and sound common sense to go to Denmark to investigate and report upon the agricultural industry there. These gentlemen went through Scotland and the crofting districts to inquire into the crofting question. He invited every Scottish Member to read the lucid, informing, moderately worded and convincing report those gentlemen had produced. The right hon. Gentleman would not take even the expression of opinion of Scottish agriculturists. He remembered the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture years ago when it was notoriously constituted on somewhat Liberal lines. He remembered that they were described by the Secretary for Scotland as hard-headed Scotsmen whose opinion ought to carry weight. He would remind the right hon. Gentleman that those hard-headed Scotsmen were still as hard-headed as ever they had been on the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, and by increasing majorities they had condemned again and again the principles of the Bill which they were now considering. To his mind this particular clause presented the most objectionable features of any clause in the Bill. It applied the crofter system which was condemned in the Report he had referred to, and also by the experience of hon. Members of this House as being inapplicable to other parts of Scotland. It was now proposed to apply this crofter system to the whole of Scotland. The hon. Member for Caithness hoped that some compromise might be arrived at in the House of Lords. His view was that if they adhered to this clause compromise was absolutely impossible. He hoped some extention of the crofter system to similarly situated parishes in Scotland might be possible. They were told in this clause that the crofter system was to be applied to the Lowlands subject to certain provisions, and the principal of those provisions was that a Land Court was to be set up, which was not contained in the original proposals of the Secretary for Scotland. This change was to be made without discussion in Committee or in this House, except in the most cursory manner. A Land Court was to be introduced, and no explanation had been given why the Government had changed the view they held when the Bill was first introduced, dealing with this subject. Why had such a body now been incorporated in the Bill? It was to be an absolutely irresponsible body from whose decisions there was to be no appeal. The Secretary for Scotland had stated that in case of any damage by compulsory removal there would be compensation. He remembered when the Bill was before the Scottish Grand Committee the question was asked whether the damage done could not be estimated by independent arbitrators, who should be paid for by the Land Courts, and the right hon. Gentleman refused to listen to that reasonable request. To call the scheme drafted by the right hon. Gentleman for paying compensation to landlords, tenants, and labourers who might be displaced, fairness was nothing more than a grotesque travesty of justice. The man who had done the damage and endangered the property would be able to say that he considered the claims put forward for compensation were frivolous, and only worth a small sum. He knew that a great many hon. Members would vote for this Bill who had never heard a single word of the debate. Those hon. Members who had listened to the debate would vote with considerable reluctance in support ot their Party. A scheme such as this meant something in the nature of a tragedy for Scottish argiculture, and it would make it very difficult for landlords to invest their capital in land. The Secretary for Scotland had asked what class of land was most suitable for small holdings, and he answered it by saying the most suitable land was that which was accessible to markets by railways and roads. The right hon. Gentleman expressly excluded all those lands in the neighbourhood of burghs which were most suitable for small holdings on account of something he intended to propose later. He had done this simply because it might interfere with some other project he was going to bring under review to-morrow.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is dealing with points which will more properly arise on other clauses.

*MR. COCHRANE thought that the aim of legislation should be to raise the standard of comfort in the country rather than impose in the Lowlands of Scotland a standard of existence to which they had fortunately been strangers. The crofters were not self-supporting at the present moment, and were only able to pay their way by the assistance they received from friends better situated than themselves, who lived in foreign countries. Consequently, their present tenure was something in the nature of a tenure by postal order, because they got their support largely from Canada and Australia, where their relatives resided. The Lord Advocate had talked about planting 50,000 men on the deer forests, but he would never be able to plant a prosperous and thriving tenantry on such land. They were told that this Bill would cure depopulation in the Highlands of Scotland. Again he would quote the returns issued during last year to controvert entirely that statement. The population of the crofting parishes in 1881 was 342,898; in 1891, it had fallen to 333,000, and in 1901 the total was 324,000. Therefore the claim that they would arrest depopulation by this Bill stood on a very feeble foundation. There was a further point which he thought hon. Members who were interested in Scotland might consider; it was pointed out in the evidence of Mr. Drysdale, who said that many of these crofts were being worked not by the manhood of Scotland and the class they would like to see reared up, but largely by women. Mr. Drysdale gave two parishes, one containing 182 crofts, 82 of which were occupied by women, and the other containing 169 crofts, sixty-six of which were worked by women. He was afraid that if the right hon. Gentleman intended to settle the suffragette question by making them owners in Scotland, he would not be conferring a very great benefit upon the country. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland had asked why did these men go to Canada? Simply because when they went there they became the owners of the soil. If the right hon. Gentleman would deal with the question of purchase, which he had shut out from his Bill, he would find a remedy for this state of things. During the course of the Grand Committee they implored the right hon. Gentleman not to cut himself off from carrying on experimental purchase of land in the Lowlands. There was only one way in which they could do this in the Lowlands, and it was by purchasing land in suitable areas, carving it out in different sized holdings, and placing in charge of each settlement someone capable of giving instruction and guidance to those who needed it. That policy could be carried out by the Government purchasing land freely in the open market, and by enabling those on the land to become their own proprietors. Men, and Scotsmen in particular, would exert themselves and work if the ultimate result was that they might raise their heads higher in the social scale and find themselves owners of the land they tilled. That was a very proper aspiration. This clause in the Bill was condemned by all Scottish agricultural opinion. He believed as an outsider and observer that the Bill was barely tolerated by Members of the Cabinet who sat near the right hon. Gentleman. He believed that it would disappear in oblivion, and that its disappearance would not be regretted in a single parish. It was designed to produce a land system which had not succeeded in any part of the habitable globe—a system foreign to Scottish methods of agriculture, which were the finest in the world.

THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. URE, Linlithgowshire) said that when he listened to the Leader of the Opposition and to the hon. Member for North Ayrshire he had great difficulty in recognising the Bill, with every line of which he was familiar. He had discussed the Bill on public platforms throughout all parts of Scotland during the autumn recess, and it had met with favour from all his fellow-countrymen who had taken the trouble to understand it. It had been received with gratitude by those for whom it was primarily intended. It was a Bill to denounce which not a single Member for Scotland who opposed it last summer had had the courage to call a public meeting of his constituents.

*MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said he had denounced it at five meetings of his constituents.

MR. URE said he was sorry that the hon. Member did not call a public meeting of his constituents for the purpose of condemning the Scottish Small Landholders Bill.

*MR. YOUNGER said he condemned it pretty stiffly when he did address a meeting.

MR. URE said that the hon. Member was well entitled to say what he chose against the Bill. He stood by his assertion that the Bill had not been denounced at a public meeting called for the purpose by any Member for Scotland. The Bill had been denounced as a tragedy involving death and ruin to agriculture, as a Bill designed to destroy the independence of the yeoman farmer, the pride of ownership, and the friendly feeling which existed between landlord and tenant in Scotland. It was a Bill, to use the phrase of the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs, to knock agriculture on the head. The Leader of the Opposition had spoken of it as a travesty of what agricultural legislation ought to be. He replied that the right hon. Gentleman's attack on the Bill was a grotesque travesty of the provisions of the measure which he was criticising, for the application of the Crofters Acts to the whole of Scotland meant only that after they were applied every small farmer in Scotland, and every small farmer who would come into existence under the machinery provided by the Bill, would be entitled as a matter of right to remain in his holding unless some good reason existed for turning him out, and every small farmer would have the right to bequeath his holding to any member of his family, provided it could be shown that he was a suitable person, The right hon. Gentleman did not deny that these were great advantages to confer on small farmers, but what he and his friends said was that they could only confer these advantages by giving them full rights of ownership. He asked the Committee to observe how narrow was the dividing line between the two sides, and how intemperate was the language of the Leader of the Opposition. Hon. Gentlemen opposite did not deny that in the public interest it was of great advantage to increase small holdings in Scotland. They did not deny that there was plenty of suitable land and suitable men to occupy it. They did not deny that the creation of small holdings could not be left to voluntary effort, that compulsion might be needed, and that it ought to be given. The Government said, on the other hand, that it was quite possible to secure the cardinal virtues which were to be found in ownership, namely, the right of security, and the right of transmitting property to a member of the family, without the drastic and revolutionary remedy which hon. Gentlemen opposite desired to apply, if they took the existing system of landlord and tenant in Scotland to which the people had become accustomed, and cut out of it the liability to arbitrary eviction, the right which the landlord now enjoyed of turning out his tenant without good cause, or, perhaps, any cause at all. That was the object of applying the Crofters Acts to the whole of Scotland, and that would be the whole effect of so applying them. These were great advantages which would be secured. He readily allowed that they could not give security of tenure unless they set up a Fair Rent Court, and applied statutory conditions. Without that court they would have the landlord fixing such an exorbitant rent that the tenant, being unable to pay, would be turned out. If they did not lay down statutory conditions, they gave security of tenure with the one hand and took it away with the other. During the autumn recess seven skilled men made an investigation into the operation of the Crofters Acts, and they had given the results of their impartial inquiry. No man would allege that those seven investigators entered upon the inquiry with any prepossession in favour of this Bill. What was the result of their inquiry? They came to the conclusion that the chief good objects which the Crofters Acts had produced were: Complete independence to the tenants; and full security for fair rents and for the improvements which they had effected upon their houses and holdings. They came to the conclusion that every advantage that security of tenure alone could produce had been produced in the crofting counties, and they asserted that they were prepared throughout the whole of Scotland to apply the Crofters' Act wherever the conditions were similar. [OPPOSITION cheers.] Hon. Gentlemen opposite agreed with that. Let them see what was the difference in the conditions and inquire whether the difference was such as to make the security of tenure which was good in the crofting counties bad in the Lowland counties, because, after all, that was the pivot on which the whole argument turned. That was the crux of the question, and the centre around which the controversy took place. The difference was that, whereas in the Lowland counties the landlord, as a rule, made the permanent improvements, in the Highlands the converse was the case. Why was this security of tenure a good thing for the small farmer who made his own improvements, and a bad thing for the small farmer who had not made his own improvements? That was the only question which they had to discuss, and he was going to answer it in the word of the seven famous investigators. They said that if the landlord was not deprived of freedom of choice in the selection of his tenant, and if he was not deprived of freedom of selection in the improvement on his farm, he should not be unwilling to spend his money in equipping his farm.

Question put, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 350; Noes, 95. (Division List No. 23.)

AYES.

Abraham,William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.HonHerbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker,Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry,Redmond J. (Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carylon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirW.M J(S.Pancras,W)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J.A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H.(St.Pancras,N)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt.Hn.SirW.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M. (Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W Bateman(Somerset,N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones,Sir D. Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh,Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal, E.)
M‘Crae, George
M‘Killop, W.
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)

Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, CharlesN. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'BrienKendal (TipperaryMid)
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (RoscommonN.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, J. Wynford (Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, RobertJohn (Norfolk, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monmth)
Richards, T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs., N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J.W.H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Tomkinson James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, RtHn.E. (Clackmannan
Wason, JohnCathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt Henry A
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carm'rth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Roberts
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Meynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, RtHn.A.J. (CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, H.)
Beach, Hn. Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hn. Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J.A (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J (Birmingh'm
Corbett, T.L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, CharlesCurtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, CaptainJames (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, SirFredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Gov.)
Faber, George Denison (York)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker

Hills, J. W.
Kenyon-Slaney, Rt.Hn.Col.W.
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee, ArthurH(Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John FrederickPeel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sandys, Lieut.-Col.Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, SirBerkeleyGeorgeD.
Smith, AbelH. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson, W. Mitchell (Lanark
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley(York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

And, it being after a quarter before Eight of the clock, the Chairman proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question put, "That Clauses 2 to 33, inclusive, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 352; Noes, 96. (Division List No. 24.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W.(T'w'rHamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L.(Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHnSirJT(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn.SydneyCharles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R.R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, SirWm.J(S.Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, CH(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H(St.Pancras,N.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, MajorE.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W)
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, RtHn.SirWBrampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L(Caithn'ss-sh.
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.

Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Jeans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman(Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, SirD.Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, SirJosephF.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A Levy(Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon, N
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M.(Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, J. Wynford (Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Philips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk, E.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Meddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Rendal Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th)
Richards, T. F.(Wolverhmpt'n)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E.(Dunde
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw, (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C.(Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel(Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset, E
Thorne, William
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Ward, W. Dudley(Southampt'n)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, Rt Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry(Halifax
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn(Carmarthn
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)

Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh, N.)
Wilson, P.W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt.HnA. J.(City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G(Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt. Hon. Victor CW.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt.Hn.J.A(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Coates, E.Feetham (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings,Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)

Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Dension (York)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Hills, J. W.
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt Hon.Col.W.
Kimber, Sir Henry
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee,Arthur H(Hants,Fareham)
Lockwood,Rt. Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn. Walter(Dublin,S.
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parkes, Ebenezer

Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John FrederickPeel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos.Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield,SirBerkeley GeorgeD.
Smith,Abel H(Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. Howard
Walker,Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York,E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Whereupon the Chairman left the Chair to report the Bill to the House, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker proceeded to put the Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time," pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

The House divided :—Ayes, 347 ; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 25.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen,A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hon HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker,Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring,Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John

Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry,Redmond J. (Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William

Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner,J.F.L.(Lancs, Leigh)
Brunner, RtHnSirJ T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt. Hn. SydneyCharl
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Camley, Sir Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.

Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J (S.Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd)
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crombie, John William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vauhgan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J.A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glen-Coats,Sir T.(Renfrew,W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn SirW.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth,R.L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M. (Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W.Bateman (Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese,SirJoseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh,Charles(Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Kean, John
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morley, Rt. Hon. John
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor,James (Wicklow,W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,W
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps,Col Ivor(S'thampton)
Philipps,J.Wynford (Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Philips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh,Central)
Price,Robert John (Norfolk,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T.F.(Wolverhampton
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Rt. Hn. E. (Dundee)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rose, Charles Day
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.

Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann,Sir C.E. (Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,Abel (Camarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A.(Glamorgan, E.)
Thompson,J.W.H. (Somerset,E
Thorne, William
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward,John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward,W. Dudley(Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Wason,Rt Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn (Carm'rth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York. W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson,J.W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,RtHn.A.J.(City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N)
Beach, Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cave, George
Cavendish,Rt.Hn. Victor C.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt Hn.J.A.(Worc
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies,David (MontgomeryCo.
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Hills, J. W.
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt.Hn.Col. W.
Kimber, Sir Henry
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt. Hn.Walter (Dublin,S)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parkes, Ebenezer
Percy, Earl
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos.Myles
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorgeD.
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool,Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson, W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A.Stanley (York,E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B.Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

King's Consent signified.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

MACEDONIA.

*MR. G. A. HARDY (Suffolk, Stowmarket) rose to move "That this House regrets the failure of the reforms which have been introduced for the amelioration of the condition of Macedonia, and urges the Government to press for the establishment of executive control by an authority responsible to the Powers." He said that in bringing this Resolution before the House, he fully realised the dangers and difficulties which surrounded it. He also realised how inadequate an advocate he was to introduce such an important Resolution, therefore he would briefly take up the time of the House in introducing it, leaving it to those who had carefully studied the subject, or who, like the hon. Member for West Ham, who had recently visited the region of Macedonia, more ably to state the case. They were, however, thankful that in the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs they had a Minister who earnestly sympathised with these poor oppressed peoples, and they confidently looked for his whole-hearted support. The Macedonian question was one which appealed to all who sympathised with suffering humanity. But there was a higher court than that to which they appealed, and that was the national honour, and it was because we were so deeply pledged as a nation by our actions in the past and by treaties we had signed that he brought this Motion before the House. It was scarcely conceivable that those who deprecated any action on our part could be aware how deeply we were pledged as a nation to see justice done. Our direct interest in this court began some thirty years ago. Public feeling in Great Britain and Europe had been roused by the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, who denounced the terrible atrocities in Bulgaria in 1876. A conference had been summoned and the action of the Porte in setting aside the recommendations of the conference brought about the war between Turkey and Russia. The Russian people were united as one man in their desire to free those of their own race. The defeat of Turkey brought about the Treaty of San Stefano, which liberated Macedonia. In an evil moment Lord Beaconsfield stepped in, and using the power of England refused to recognise the treaty and called the Congress of Berlin. The result was the handing back of Macedonia deliberately to Turkey under the promise of certain definite reforms. We as a nation were thus responsible to Macedonia and it was our duty to see that our pledges were carried out. In 1903, after twenty-five years of waiting and suffering, the Macedonian people rose in rebellion—a mad act which only the desperate necessity of their case could excuse. That rebellion was put down with terrible cruelty. Austria and Russia then stepped in, and an arrangement was made at Mürzsteg by the Emperor to try and bring better conditions to help the country. Turkey's assent was given to a very modified form of control. Lord Lansdowne was far from being satisfied and urged much stronger measures, but ultimately accepted the modified arrangement. The most important part of the Mürzsteg programme was in the reorganising of the *gendarmerie*, and placing them under the supervision, but not under the direct control, of the foreign officers. Practically their work had resolved itself into simply an attitude of watching and reporting to the Powers. The result had proved thoroughly unsatisfactory. In 1903, Lord Lansdowne again urged that stronger measures must be taken. He wanted a Commission to have real control of the finance and administration, and in urging it he said—

> "The Commission would be given administrative and executive power and would in the first instance be instructed to frame without delay schemes for the effective control of the administration of finance and justice."

He had also stated that—

> "Nothing could be satisfactory which did not include: (*a*) An immediate reduction of the military forces in Macedonia and its neighbourhood to the forces strictly required for maintenance of internal order and security."

It was in the midst of this last attempt of his that the change of Government occurred and the matter was dropped. In 1906 and 1907 Turkey desired to raise the import duties from 8 to 11 per cent., which money she promised to use after satisfying a few commercial reforms for the Finance Commission in Macedonia. The conditions for allowing this increase were laid down by Austria and Russia, who made proposals for judicial reforms, all Powers agreeing as interested parties, especially Great Britain, who was interested in 60 per cent. of the trade. In 1908 the Minister for Foreign Affairs made further proposals to increase the *gendarmerie* and give it powers to hunt down the bands, most of whom were now Greek, but as Austria and Russia refused their support it was withdrawn. But now a new and startling development had occurred.

Austria had sought the permission of the Porte to survey or build a railway through Novi Baza, and thus connect Bosnia with the Macedonian railways and ultimately with Salonica. Russia, evidently realising that this action had been done apart from the arrangement made between the two countries, replied by suggesting a railway from the Danube to the Adriatic. We could only now conclude that the *entente* between Russia and Austria was at an end, and that the opportunity had arisen for Great Britain again to press for reforms in Macedonia. Speaking for himself, he did not think they need object to the railways as long as the Macedonians were not taxed to make and sustain them. What had been the result of the four years following the reform scheme? However well it was intended, it had proved a direct incentive to murder on a vast scale. Tho Powers deliberately held out a prospect of an approaching modification of territorial boundaries with a view to the more regular grouping of the different nationalities, and the result of that had been to fan race hatred and bring the most disastrous consequences on the country, consequences more terrible than anything since the massacres of 1903. Since the introduction of the reform scheme, in a country of 1,500,000 people, 10,000 people had been murdered.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nearly as bad as Ireland.

*MR. G. A. HARDY said that it was worse than Ireland, bad as Ireland was. When they thought that that was a third of the population of Ireland, barely the population of Wales, and practically the population of one of our big towns, they could see the terrible conditions to which the poor unfortunate people of Macedonia had been subjected. The monthly murders still showed no sign of diminution. He noticed in that day's *Times* a telegram from Sofia stating that—

> "During the past few days a number of fresh atrocities had been reported in Macedonia. The continuance of outrages on a large scale at this season of the year was altogether an exception and was very ominous for the coming spring. The principal event last week, according to a report by *gendarmerie* officers was an attack on a settlement of Vlach shepherds, near Karaferia by a Greek band. Four shepherds were killed, three were wounded, and 3,280 sheep and goats and 150 horses and mules were slaughtered. Recent occurrences illustrate the statement in a memorandum by *gendarmerie* officers that the excesses of the Turkish troops in the villages show no diminution. The French *adjoint*, Colonel Verand, has protested against the misbehaviour of the troops in carrying out perquisitions in the kazas of Nevrokop and Djumaia. In the Zarovo districts of Seres the troops compelled a priest and several villagers to set fire to a house in which a band was concealed. In view of the British proposal to transfer the pursuit of the bands to the *gendarmerie*, the following official figures are interesting as indicating how the troops discharge this duty. Killed in 1907—Bulgarians, 236; Greeks, 89; Serbs, 88; Vlachs, 4. Captured—Bulgarians, 10; Greeks, 29; Serbs, 8."

The small number of captured compared to the number of those killed told its own tale. He would give only one other illustration as to the terrible condition of that country, and that was an account of an outrage recently committed by Turkish troops at the village of Belitsa in the Vilayet of Monastir—

> "In the afternoon two detachments composed of about 150 soldiers each reached Belitsa from Kirtchevo and Ochrida. The soldiers remained in the village more than forty-eight hours. During that time they assembled all the men of the village in one place, where they were kept under arrest by a party of soldiers, while the great majority of the troops broke into the houses, and, on the pretext of searching for supposed 'komitajis,' violated the unprotected women and young girls, and gave themselves up to every kind of vloience and plunder, carrying off and eating everything that could be taken away or consumed. Thirteen women were violated, and several young girls suffered the same fate. In the case of one of the peasant men unspeakable outrages were committed by the troops."

EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.): What documents are you quoting from?

*MR. G. A. HARDY said he was quoting from the Blue-book. What could be done? They pressed for executive control for the Finance Commissioners as desired by Lord Lansdowne, the Sultan to retain suzerainty, as in Bulgaria, but not direct rule. The Commissioners would thus control the Army, *gendarmerie*, and justice, as well as finance. Now was their opportunity. In writing to Mr. Bryce at a public meeting which he could not attend, the present Foreign Secretary used words which it seemed to him were almost prophetic. He wrote—

> "I am sorry to be out of reach of the meeting. I fear that separate action by the British Government alone would be useless or worse, but the leading Governments of Europe, including our own, or even two or three of them together, could certainly stop massacres and secure permanent reform in Macedonia. And it is shameful that they do not do it. I hope the meeting will help to stir the public conscience both in England and elsewhere till the Governments in question or some of them are forced to co-operate and act effectively. Our Government should encourage and support such action by every means in its power."

The cry from Macedonia, heard and responded to by the Apostle Paul, was for spiritual help and knowledge, which he planted in fruitful ground and which grew and developed into a strong Christian Church 1800 years ago. For 500 years their fellow Christians had had to exist under the blighting cruelty of the Turk and still survived. The cry came again, and this time the appeal was to Christian England from a nation bleeding at every pore. The cry was, "Save us, or we perish." The cry came from widows of murdered husbands, husbands of violated wives, orphans bereft of their parents, from a beautiful but desolate country. In God's name might they respond and help!

*Mr. GOOCH (Bath), in seconding the Motion said that the discussion came at a very opportune moment. A few days ago the Vienna correspondent of *The Times* telegraphed the following words—

> "The future of Macedonia and the Balkan States and of the Eastern question is at stake."

That was putting the case very high, but he did not think too high. All Europe, not only the large but the little Powers, were waiting anxiously for the speech which the Foreign Secretary would make, and they very much hoped that that speech would be of such a character as to contribute to a successful solution of the most difficult problem which confronted statesmanship within the limits of Europe. To understand the situation, he ventured to ask the House to recall the condition of affairs which existed before the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs took office. When he came to power a little over two years ago, he found the ground occupied by the Austro-Russian Programme known by the name of the Mürzsteg Programme. That programme had a large number of clauses, but only one of them, by common consent, had actually resulted in anything at all tangible and beneficial to the country interested, and that was the scheme by which the so-called *gendarmerie* were handed over, not for command, but for instruction and advice, to a very limited number of European officers. He did not believe people over here, when they read about the European officers of the *gendarmerie*, perhaps realised that those officers, unlike officers in any other part of the world, could not give an order, and if they did it would not be obeyed. All they could do was to give advice to the real commanding officers, and when massacres took place they could photograph corpses, which they had often done, and report to their own Government. Lord Lansdowne, as they knew very well, in giving his consent to that very imperfect programme, reserved to himself and to Great Britain the full right of intervening at a later stage with a more drastic and far-reaching programme of reform, should the Mürzsteg Programme, as he expected, fail to achieve the solution of the problem, and as his hon. friend below had just said, only a day or two before the late Government went out of power a Financial Commission was established. That Commission was the one and only piece of really useful machinery that had yet been set up in Macedonia, and although it had not done very much, it made possible a great deal more than had at the present been achieved. What they asked for that night, in all subsequent reform, and all subsequent changes which were likely or possible to be introduced, was that that foundation should be retained and that reform should be super-imposed upon it. Since the right hon. Gentleman came into office, he very much regretted to say that in the opinion of a large number of people in this country who followed Balkan affairs with close attention, of many statesmen, and of the population of the Balkan States themselves, there had been a distinct relaxation of interest and effort on the part of Great Britain. He did not say there had been that relaxation; but what he did say was that that was the impression which the right hon. Gentleman's policy had made in the minds of a very large number of people, both here and in the Near East. If he were to say that nothing had been accomplished since the present Foreign Secretary came into power except the attachment of certain conditions to the granting of the increase in the customs duties, he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would not contradict him. He wished that were not correct, but he feared it was. It was literally the only thing that had been actually done during the two years or more that the present Government had been in power, and that was done, as they knew very well, because the raising of duties was suggested not by England or any other great Power, but by Turkey herself in her own interests. Apart from that single thing, which was a very poor record for two years of diplomacy, they came to two things which had been attempted to be done. The first was the proposal for judicial reform. Austria and Russia undertook to elaborate a proposal of judicial reform some eighteen months ago. They took a very long time doing it, and after it was presented to the various Powers, it was presented to the Porte only a few months ago. From what they heard in the papers that programme of judicial reform was a very poor affair, but poor as it was it was too strong meat for the Sultan, and he had up to the present time refused to accept it. He would like the Foreign Secretary, when he spoke, to tell them exactly in what state the negotiations in relation to judicial reform stood at the present moment. The Foreign Secretary's chief objective in connection with Macedonia in the last few years had been to try to suppress the newest and gravest element of the existing disturbance, namely, the Christian bands, which dishonoured the name of Christian. He had tried to do that in three ways. The first way, which had been utterly inadequate, had been by repeated remonstrances at Athens, at Belgrade and at Sophia. That having failed, the Powers collectively last autumn informed the Balkan States concerned that the article of the Mürzsteg programme, which held out the prospect of the possibility of territorial re-adjustment on racial lines, would be cancelled. That no doubt was a very wise step to take, but unfortunately it had had no effect at all, and so only a few weeks ago the Foreign Secretary had taken the matter into his hands, and for the first time since he took office had made a really strong and comprehensive demand for the reform of Macedonia. That reform was that the *gendarmerie* should be so far increased as to be capable of dealing with the bands themselves, and that the money necessary for the increased number of *gendarmerie* should be obtained by a corresponding reduction of the Turkish Army in that province. That was rejected, first by Austria and then by Russia, and if they were to trust the public press the English proposal had been withdrawn. If that was so he trusted it was not given up altogether, and he hoped the Foreign Secretary would tell them exactly at what stage this proposal stood. It was so good, so reasonable and so necessary that if it was refused in that form it could only be that the Foreign Secretary might put it forward in another form and press it with all the power at his disposal. At the time they did not know why Austria and Russia had refused to accept this. They had guessed that their interest in Macedonian reform was not very deep, and now they knew it. The successful request of Austria for a favour for herself only three weeks ago had changed by a dramatic stroke the whole situation. In asking for a railway through Servia she was entirely within her rights; but when she said the railway was purely economic, those who knew anything about the place knew that that was not the case. She already had a direct route from Vienna to Salonica. The new railway was a strategic and military line. This demand on the part of Austria had had two effects already, one comparatively unimportant, but the other of enormous importance. The least important was that it had caused Russia to ask in her turn for a railway from the Danube to the Adriatic. It would pass through Servia, which would be only too delighted to have an outlet for her pigs and her other staple products for the West of Europe, instead of sending them through Austria or by way of Salonica and the Mediterranean. They knew very well that if the Russian railway was made it would be in the first place a strategic checkmate to the Austrian railway, and therefore anybody who was afraid of Austrian influence becoming predominant in the Balkans might take comfort from the fact that in all probability if the one railway was built the other would be built also. He was very strongly in favour of the opening up of the country by railways, though on the condition that it must not be at the cost of an enormous and crushing burden disguised under the name of a kilometric guarantee, which he regretted to say was the case with most of the railways in Asia Minor. A railway, necessarily, was itself an emissary of civilisation in nearly all parts of the world, but not in the Balkan Peninsula. In Macedonia it had been very little but an additional burden on the people, because the railways, instead of going from town to town and catering for local traffic and industry, carefully avoided the towns and lengthened the route even over the most level plains in order to increase the amount of kilometric guarantee to the investors, and, besides, imposed an additional burden on the population, owing to the fact that the line had to be very carefully watched by soldiers all along its course. Therefore, their approval of railways was subject to the very important proviso that no unfair burden was placed on the people. The more important result was that the Murzsteg programme was killed. It had very little life in it six weeks ago when this bomb was thrown into diplomatic areas, and now it had no life at all. The chess board was clear, and a new game was going to begin. What they were asking for was that Great Britain's policy should play a very much more leading part than it had done during the last few years. The fact that a new situation had arisen had been recognised in every capital in Europe, except Vienna. It had been recognised even by Baron d'Arenthal, when he said a little time ago, immediately after throwing this diplomatic bomb, that the exclusive mandate of Austria and Russia had come to an end, and that the question of Macedonian reform had become one for all the great Powers. The concession which Austria had asked for, though legal, was one which could not become operative until she had obtained the leave of the Porte, and it was obvious to anybody who knew Turkey or human nature that a Power could not press Turkey to give reform in Macedonia while at the same time she was asking for something for herself. He hoped they would hear nothing more about a mandate to the interested Powers. They had had an opportunity and had misused it. Now it was the turn of the disinterested Powers, and he hoped England would be leader of those disinterested Powers. A Concert could not be a very homogeneous body, and might be an incoherent and weakly organism, but the Concert would go on and the question was who was going to lead it. Austria and Russia had led it until now, and he asked that Great Britain should lead it in the near future. There were two things to be done in order to achieve that object. The first was that the Foreign Secretary should somehow or other manage to convince Europe and the Balkan States that he was in real earnest about this matter. He did not mean to say that people thought he was not in earnest, but there were degrees even of earnestness; and there was a very definite impression abroad, not merely in the Balkan States, but in more than one of the capitals of the great Powers, that the interest of the English Foreign Office in this matter had not been so deep as perhaps it was in earlier years. The first thing we had to do was to convince the other Powers that we cared very much about it, and that we were determined to obtain some effective reform. The second thing was to find some alliance, some practical working arrangement within the limits of the Concert, which would enable England to carry out the policy which he was sure the Foreign Secretary desired. The Foreign Secretary's letter four years ago, which had been read, said truly that England could not act alone, but it went on to say with equal truth and with still more importance that it was not necessary for action to get unanimity with all the Powers. Therefore the practical question arose: To whom should they look? Austria, he did not say permanently, but for the time, had put herself out of court. If she asked for anything from Turkey for Macedonia the Sultan would have a perfect right to think, and would probably know, that the asking was a mere formality. Therefore the desire of many people, not only in England and in the Balkans, but in Russia itself, was that we should win over Russia to a more advanced policy in the Balkan Peninsula. The treaty that we concluded last summer would facilitate friendly discussions on all inter-European matters, and in addition to that they must never forget that Russia was Slavonian and that Vienna was German. Russia, thirty years ago, was not a tyrant or an autocrat, but a liberator, and the Balkans had never forgotten that, and there were large masses of Russian opinion that had never forgotten it. One of the most remarkable and interesting features of the discussion of the last two or three weeks had been the expression of opinion, not only in the English and Balkan, but in the Russian Press, that the time had now come for Russia to swing round to her French ally and her new English friend. Many people were of opinion that Russia would be willing to help. She could, of course, carry France with her, and then Italy would be only too ready to join. The question next arose whether Germany or Austria, possibly drawn nearer together by the general hostility which their recent Turkish policy had excited, would be able, if they desired, to block the advance. So anxious were he and his friends to put an end to this great European scandal, that they would be willing for this country to secure the assent of Germany by a bargain in connection with the Bagdad railway. He did not wish to discuss that large question that night, but it was well known that with the Germans, who took a realistic view of politics, appeals either to treaties or humanity were likely to have much less effect than a bargain in connection with the Bagdad railway, on which they had set their heart. He threw out that suggestion simply as a possible way of removing German hostility. Very briefly he would explain why they were asking the Foreign Secretary and the country to take an interest in this question, and why the Government should make a move. Lord Fitzmaurice said last night, speaking of the Congo, that they were bound by treaty and by humanity to act. That was equally true of Macedonia. In regard to the question of humanity, the sufferings of Macedonians, and so on, he would say but little, because his hon. friend the Member for West Ham had been there a few months ago, and he would no doubt give the House the benefit of his recent experience. Without any exaggeration of language he thought Macedonia could be described as the Congo of Europe. It was a tragedy in which the Macedonian peasant was the victim, and the Turkish soldiers, the Christian bands, and the Albanians were the villains of the piece. No man's life was safe there, and anyone who doubted that statement should read the Blue-book published last year, which was full of the most sickening and revolting cruelties from beginning to end, and then he would agree with him that no man's life was safe there and no woman's honour. *The Times* correspondent, who knew as much about Balkan politics as any living man, stated that the year 1906–7 was the worst year since the great rebellion of 1903. So much for the reason why this country should take action. And, finally, as to what to do. There were three proposals before the country. One proposal which found a great amount of support was that they should do nothing, and stand idly by watching the ebb and flow of diplomatic forces and intrigue. He felt sure that the Foreign Secretary would have nothing to say to that. The second proposal was that we should treat Macedonia like Bosnia, and hand it over to Austria and Russia. He confessed that that suggestion filled him with amazement and indignation. There were three absolutely decisive reasons against it. In the first place, the Macedonians of all races would oppose it. In the second place, Russia's record in Georgia and other parts did not lead them to desire that Macedonia should be handed over to her tender mercies. The third reason was that, supposing the whole of Macedonia were handed over to Austria and Russia, then good-bye to liberty and to the freedom and unfettered development of the Balkan States. Having exhausted those two policies there remained a third and, in his opinion, the only possible programme, and that was to reassert the great principle laid down by Lord Lansdowne that the only real reform was control. That was the true Macedonian policy, and he was sure the right hon. Baronet would not contradict that. That programme, which was explained so fully in 1905, had been given to the House in general outline by the mover of this Resolution. The Financial Commission should be given executive power, and control of expenditure. The *gendarmerie* should be increased to hunt down the bands; and the officers should have power to command the force and not merely to report outrages. The army in Macedonia should be decreased and put under the orders of the Inspector-General assisted by the Financial Commission; and the system of farming taxes should be abolished. Some form of judicial reform should again be put forward, and all these reforms, or any one of them as they came, should apply not only to the existing vilayets, but also to the vilayet of Adrianople. Those were the proposals of Lord Lansdowne. They had been before Europe for three years, but until now there had been no really effective chance of getting them accomplished. He thought the Foreign Secretary had a better chance of getting some, if not all, of them accomplished than had hitherto existed, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman's speech would constitute a distinct advance on any utterance he had made since his accession to office, and form a rallying point for those who were interested in the liberation, development, and prosperity of Macedonia.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House regrets the failure of the reforms which have been introduced for the amelioration of the condition of Macedonia, and urges the Government to press for the establishment of executive control by an authority responsible to the Powers.—(*Mr. George Hardy.*)

*EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.): I can promise the House that I shall not take up much time, because we have already been reminded that there are several hon. Members who have recently visited Macedonia who are anxious to tell us their experiences. At the present moment we do not know whether the policy of His Majesty's Government has changed, or the precise reasons which have led to the rejection of their proposals. There is, however, one comment which I may be allowed to made on the Motion which has been moved. The Motion under discussion invites this House to urge the Government "to press for the establishment of executive control by an authority responsible to the Powers." I understand that the right hon. Gentleman recently put forward the proposal that executive control should be given to the European officers who are acting in command of the *gendarmarie* and that that policy has fallen through owing to the refusal of the Powers to support it. The hon. Member now suggests that the Government should continue to press this policy and so far as the merits of the proposal are concerned I agree with him, but at the same time I cannot help feeling that the situation when once a proposal has been rejected is somewhat changed, and that we ought not to press the Government to insist on measures to which the Powers object unless we very carefully consider the consequences to which such a course might lead, and the action which it would be necessary for this country to adopt under such circumstances. The hon. Member outlined three possible policies. I am not going to follow him in his analysis of schemes for the alienation of territories which belong to the Sultan, though I would observe in passing that his advocacy of co-operation with Russia in opposition to the other Powers is hardly consistent with his statement that there is no Power whose intervention would be more distasteful to the population of Macedonia than that of Russia. I quite agree that there are three policies open to this country to adopt. One is that we should wash our hands altogether, to use a homely phrase, of reform in Macedonia, and that we should say henceforth that we have no responsibility whatever for anything that goes on there. The second is that we should continue to act as a member of the Concert as we have done hitherto, assisting the other Powers by suggestions of our own where we think we can do so usefully, and supporting their policy at Constantinople; but that we should recognise the fact that from the outset we have deliberately abandoned the initiative to Austria and Russia whose geographical proximity to the scene of action not only gives them the greatest interest in the maintenance of law and order, but the most effective means of securing it. The third policy is that we should put forward some ideal solution of our own, without regard to the susceptibilities of our colleagues in the Concert, and be prepared to insist on its adoption in the teeth of opposition, both by the Powers themselves and by the Turkish Government. The policy for which in my opinion there is nothing to be said—a policy into which it seems to me there is a danger of our drifting—is that we should remain nominally a member of the Concert, bound by its collective decisions, pledged to do nothing which will in any degree affect the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire, but at the same time that we should be perpetually putting forward, and advertising to the public from day to day the fact that we are putting forward suggestions of our own which are not accepted by the other Powers, the probability of the acceptance of which we have not taken the trouble to ascertain beforehand, and the rejection of which by them has very serious consequences. In the first place it cannot but weaken the effectiveness of the action of the Concert by revealing the fact that it is not united. In the second place it induces the Turks to resist every proposal we do put forward, not because it is unreasonable in itself, but because they know from bitter experience that it is only the prelude to others more extreme. And lastly, it encourages the revolutionary elements in Macedonia to continue the agitation in the belief that, sooner or later, this country will be compelled to intervene actively on their behalf. That is a consideration which I have frequently put forward in this House, and it is a consideration to which I attach the greatest importance. My experience is not so recent as that of the hon. Member, but I went through Macedonia in 1902 when the disturbances were just beginning, and certainly it was at that time the ineradicable belief of the Christians of every denomination that this country could be counted upon in the last resort to intervene, and that there was even a good chance that we would establish a Protectorate or annex the country ourselves. Nothing could disabuse their minds of that idea. Precisely the same experience has been related to me by travellers who have subsequently visited the country, and I cannot help feeling that the worst of debates like this in the House, of which no one would complain on other grounds, is that they infallibly result in bolstering up that belief. I believe myself that the more plainly we repudiate it, and the more those responsible for the Government make it clear that under no circumstances will this country intervene actively, and take isolated action in the case of Macedonia, the more humane will be our conduct from the point of view of the people concerned. As to the three policies I have mentioned, I regard the idea of separate action on our part as outside the range of practical politics. We have far too many commitments on hand already to justify us in embarking on a crusade in which we have no direct national interest, and there is the further consideration which I think is rather lost sight of in these debates, namely, that we cannot possibly adopt a policy of that kind without running the risk of widespread disturbance of peace in the East, the consequences of which will principally affect, not ourselves, but Austria and Russia. As for the policy of washing our hands altogether of all that goes on in Macedonia, if we merely consulted our selfish interest, I think there would be a good deal to be said in favour of that policy, but I should regret its adoption for two reasons. In the first place, we have undoubtedly a responsibility under the Berlin Treaty—a responsibility which I think has been greatly exaggerated. But it is a real one, and I should be loth to repudiate it. The second reason why I should regret the adoption of such a policy is that I am not prepared to admit that the Mürzsteg Programme has been a failure. As a matter of fact every item of that programme has been put into execution, and there is

Earl Percy.

not, I think, a single material criticism which was directed against it, when it was first introduced, by friends of the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Motion which has not been met and remedied. I remember that one of the complaints made was that the tenure of the Inspector-General was limited to two years. The tenure of the Inspector-General has been since prolonged, and, practically, as everyone knows, he is irremovable except with the consent of the Powers. "Oh," it was said, "the European control ought to be more sub-divided, instead of being vested exclusively in the hands of Austria and Russia, who are supposed to be animated by reactionary views." There is not a single great European Power which has not been admitted to a substantial share in that control. It was suggested that the control could not be effective so long as it did not extend to the sphere of finance. Now the whole of the finances of Macedonia are placed under the effective control of the Financial Commission. They have absolute control over both expenditure and the raising of revenue. [AN HON. MEMBER: Not the amount.] My recollection is that every item in the Budget has to receive the preliminary approval of the Financial Commission. The real gist of the complaint that the Murzsteg scheme has been a failure arises from the solitary fact that it has not been successful in putting an end to crime and outrage in Macedonia. That was the main complaint of the hon. Gentlemen who moved and seconded the Motion. They related that there had been 10,000 murders in the course of the last four years. That is a horrible and shocking state of things that we should all like to see put an end to at the earliest moment, but I remember that five years ago when I was first called upon to take part in these debates in this House we were constantly assured that these murders and atrocities were the result of Turkish barbarity and—with a strange oblivion of events in Eastern Roumelia and Odessa—that such occurrences were impossible except under Moslem rule. We now have it not only stated in the Blue-books, but admitted by the right hon. Gentleman himself in reply to a deputation last year, that to a considerable extent, indeed so far as the majority of the outrages are concerned, they are not due to the action of the Turks, but to the action of the various Christian communities, and that they have their origin not in a common desire on the part of these communities to get rid of a common oppressor in the shape of the Turkish Government, but in the intense anxiety of each that, if ever Turkish rule disappears, not one of them shall be exposed to the tender mercies of the other. I know it is said that the Turkish Government do not object to these outrages, and that if they do not actively connive, they take no active steps to stop them. The hon. Member for Ripon has published his opinion that so far as the Inspector-General is concerned he is sincerely anxious to put down the operations of the bands—and in any case it hardly lies in the mouth of those who say that the Turkish Government cannot be trusted to put down disturbances without cruelty, to complain that it does not act. For my own part, I deeply deplore this state of things. I deeply deplore the fact that the Turkish Government does not seem to recognise that it is to its own interest to act with the European *gendarmerie* with a view to putting a stop to it. So far as I understand it, and I think I can speak on behalf of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who sit on these benches, I entirely approve of the policy with regard to the police put forward by the right hon. Gentleman. Well, if we are not to adopt isolated action, and if we are not to wash our hands of all responsibility, then it seems to me that there is only one practical alternative, and that is that we should remain in the Concert and accept the inevitable limitations if such a position; that we should recognise that progress, if progress there be, must be slow; and that our suggestions should be such as have a reasonable chance of being adopted. There is one suggestion I should like earnestly to press on the right hon. Gentleman, which if not apparently important, I believe is very important. It has already been alluded to by the hon. Gentleman opposite. I observe that Baron Aehrenthal, in his speech the other day, pointed out that one cause of the continued disturbances in Macedonia was the hope held out to the various nationalities under the Murzsteg programme of an eventual rearrangement of the administrative areas according to the distribution of the various nationalities. I always thought that that particular provision in the Murzsteg programme was a very debatable one, and might lead to disastrous consequences. and I hope that His Majesty's Government will definitely press for its abandonment altogether. I cannot help thinking that when the time arrives to which the authors of the Murzsteg looked forward when they suggested that eventual redistribution of areas, a far better solution would be that which was adopted in its Lebanon, where instead of grouping the various nationalities in homogeneous areas we prevented the ascendancy of any by arranging for the equal representation of each on the local administrative councils. As regards the proposal for the reform of the Judiciary, we do not know its character, whether it is confined to the appointment of inspectors, or extends to the association of European assessors with the Turkish Judges. I do not think that the mere appointment of inspectors would be of very much use. The only other point is the proposal made in regard to the police. I understand that two suggestions were made by the right hon. Gentleman. The first was that executive authority should be given to the officers of the police, and that flying columns of *gendarmerie* should be organised in order to deal with the bands. I imagine that the effectiveness of such a policy will depend very largely on its details, and that it will lead to very little practical results if the *gendarmerie* are to act separately in water-tight compartments under their own officers in the various spheres allotted to the different Powers. I observe that the hon. Member for Ripon finds an analogy in the organisation of *gendarmerie* columns in Bosnia during the Austrian occupation; but I would point out that in Bosnia the control of the military and of the police were in the same hands, and that the circumstances of Macedonia present a much closer analogy to those which existed in the Lebanon where one of the Powers entered that country with the assent and mandate of all the other Powers with 6,000 troops for its pacification. I do not think that the policy of the right hon. Gentleman would stand much chance of success unless the *gendarmerie* acted in close touch with the regular army if not under the orders of the military authorities. The second suggestion is that the Turkish Government should reduce the number of regular forces in Macedonia while at the same time there should be a substantial increase in the numbers of the *gendarmerie*. I am not sure that it is reasonable to expect the Turks to reduce their regular forces until the additional *gendarmerie* are provided. It must be remembered that the Bulgarian Army against the possibility of invasion by which the Turkish troops are concentrated in Macedonia, amounts to three or four times, on mobilisation, the number of the Turkish garrison. When Lord Lansdowne suggested a reduction of the Turkish troops in order to set free money for reforms in Macedonia he insisted that Bulgaria should be asked to reduce its army in a corresponding degree, or that failing that, the Powers should give a collective guarantee that Bulgaria should not be permitted to invade Turkish territory during the period when the reforms were being carried out. As regards the substitution of *gendarmerie* for regulars it must be remembered that the *gendarmerie* and the army perform quite different functions, and that it will take some time to raise the additional force. What are the prospects of securing the necessary recruits for the *gendarmerie*? I observe that General Georgis is pessimistic on that point, and the 4,000 *gendarmerie* already enlisted might do much if they were relieved of civilian duties such as the collection of tithes and the supervision of monopolies. The criticisms which I have offered are largely criticisms of detail, but it is impossible until we know more to judge how far the non-success of the Government's policy is due to the apathy of the other Powers in the Concert or to a want of elaboration in the details of that policy itself. I have no fault to find with the policy advocated in the Resolution, but I should view with very considerable alarm the withdrawal, either temporary or permanent, of Great Britain from the Concert of Europe, because I believe that, however disappointing the results of that Concert have been, it is certainly the most effective instrument which has yet been devised for introducing any reform at all, and the consequences of disappointing the people of these Balkan States who have so long been invited to place their hopes on the united action of Europe may be serious indeed.

MR. MASTERMAN (West Ham, N.) said that not for the first time he had listened with pleasure to the speech of the noble Lord, and to his eloquence, ability, and courtesy towards his interruptors. But on the present occasion he must express as profound disagreement with the noble Lord's main conclusions as one rational human being could entertain for another. He found in the noble Lord's speech a profound difference in tone and temper from the speech on a similar subject recently made by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords. It seemed to him that in the noble Lord's utterances there was a definite and rather scornful repudiation of the whole system which Lord Lansdowne had carried out with success.

*EARL PERCY said he had expressly stated that he concurred in the views put forward by Lord Lansdowne.

MR. MASTERMAN said that the noble Lord had declared that the one policy that seemed incredible was the policy of putting forward large and somewhat vague propositions for reform by one of the Powers which might be repudiated by the other Powers, but which might excite some hopes in the revolutionists.

*EARL PERCY said that what he had stated was they should not be put forward before it was understood that they were likely to be accepted.

MR. MASTERMAN said that even with that qualification he could not help saying that Lord Lansdowne had given some encouragement to those who were desirous of seeing some reforms accomplished when his appeal was being made.

*EARL PERCY said that Lord Lansdowne's suggestions were almost all accepted.

MR. MASTERMAN said that Lord Lansdowne suggested to the Turkish Government in a public utterance that there should be a Christian Governor.

*EARL PERCY said that what Lord Lansdowne had put forward was one of two alternatives; the appointment of a Governor, or the appointment of a Commission with executive powers; but Lord Lansdowne had expressed no preference for the former.

MR. MASTERMAN said that in the short time at their disposal he did not want to enter into a controversy across the Table with the noble Lord as to what things had been done in the past. They had seen with pride that Lord Lansdowne was leading the Concert of Europe, and if Lord Lansdowne's programme put forward in public utterances, and not in the secret utterances of diplomacy, had now been in active operation in Macedonia, he and his friends would have been perfectly content, and this Resolution would never have been proposed. After all, what were his friends, whose speeches were characterised by moderation, fairness, and sanity, pressing for in this debate? They did not ask that the Turks should be driven bag and baggage out of Europe, but were simply attempting to realise what he honestly believed would have been realised at the present moment if Lord Lansdowne had retained the control of the Department of Foreign Affairs. The noble Lord had said that the Mürzsteg programme was a good programme, and that practically its best points had been carried out; but those who had taken an interest in this question were unable to endorse that opinion. He had only intervened in the debate because he thought that the House might be interested to hear as shortly as possible what had been the experience of one who had got behind the screen which at present sheltered Macedonia from Europe, and sheltered the knowledge of Eurpoe from Macedonia. There was great divergence between the statements made in high diplomatic circles regarding Macedonia, and the actual condition of that unfortunate country. In this connection he would like to pay a special tribute to the work of the correspondents of *The Times* in all the Balkans and especially in Macedonia. One of these correspondents had visited the heart of the disturbed district, and had given entirely reliable and trustworthy information. And yet the speeches of the noble Lord, who was no doubt sincere in this matter, showed that the true facts of the case were not really known. They were told by correspondents from every capital in Europe that not only had the Mürzsteg programme been deliberately torn up by the action of an interested Power, but that it had failed in the very work which it was intended to do. He believed he was right in saying that the Minister for Foreign Affairs acknowledged that, apart from the new situation created, it was time to realise that four years of reform under that programme had not been much better than years of insurrection. The Mürzsteg programme in effectual action had been confined to the introduction of the *gendarmerie* and the establishment of the International Commission. The *gendarmerie* had never in the least degree approached the proposals contained in the Mürzsteg programme. The object of the plan was a mixed *gendarmerie*, with European officers and European non-commissioned officers engaged in the work of maintaining public peace and order in Macedonia, but that had never been carried out. He had visited these districts through the kindly hospitality of the International soldiery, many of whom with numbers of officers were at the present time scattered over the disturbed district. One and all they were in a condition of disgust and despair. As to the condition of what was called reform, there was no alteration, and in the vilayets of Monestir and other places the Mürzsteg programme which the noble Lord thought had been carried out had not been put into effect. What was going on had been described as "the European comedy," but it was not a comedy it was a farce, and it more nearly approached a tragic farce than anything that he had any knowledge of. The officers were perpetually in the presence of murder, outrage, and injustice. The noble Lord seemed to suggest that the warfare of the rival Christian bands was responsible for what was going on, and in Austria the other day it was stated by an official that the killing of Turks had practically ceased; but the Minister who made that statement had been misinformed on the subject, and if he would take the trouble to inquire of his own Austrian officers he would hear a different description. It was perfectly true, and they had always deplored it, that some of the most unfortunate conditions prevailing in this unfortunate country were due to the rivalry, as they thought largely encouraged by the third article of the programme and connived at without a shadow of doubt by the central Turkish Government, of these bands who wished to convert their neighbouring Christian fellow-citizens to various forms of religion. But when he asked the officers whether the elimination of these rival Christian bands by strong influence applied at Belgrade, Sofia, and Athens would render the country entirely peaceable, they one and all denied it. They said that although the bands greatly aggravated the condition of misery of the unfortunate population, yet in some respects they had done good, and they ascribed to their existence the comparative immunity in some instances from cases of outrage and abduction of women, because those who were Turkish subjects found that the bands knew how to take vengeance upon them. Therefore there was a general desire that the Foreign Secretary should tell them that some measures would be taken , because the elimination of the rival Christian bands would not be in the least degree satisfactory without the very definite establishment of order and good government and some elemental rights of justice as between Christian and Mahomedan The other point of the Mürzsteg programme, which it had been attempted to carry out, was the International Commission, and he could not believe and he should not believe it unless he heard it from his own mouth that Lord Lansdowne ever intended that International Commission to be established at Salonika, without determining to follow up what he had asked all Europe to join with him in pressing and without some executive control. The Commission had done more harm than good by its impotence. Up to a few years ago an Italian Officer told him that where there were European travellers or where European officers were established, the Turks could not commit outrages with impunity, but he said their presence there had made that state of things cease, because outrages were committed with perfect impunity in their very presence and at their very doors. While he was lunching with one officer there came the news of one murder and at dinner time there came the news of another. A British officer in Constantinople told him that the idea that Christians and Europeans could not command Mahomedans was perfectly absurd, and the suggestion of a flying column came from the very remarkable man who was leader of the English section in Monastir. Many of the officers were in despair and disgusted with their impotence and intended either to give up the work at present or in the immediate future, and one of them said to him: "I will be no longer an actor in the European comedy." Meanwhile, they were waiting for the scheme of judicial reforms of which the House had no information at the present time. The fundamental impression he had of the country was that the taxation was iniquitous, as also was the system of giving over a large subject population who were unarmed into the complete control of a small dominant population who were armed. That system remained quite independent of the work of the Commission, with most deplorable results. Referring to the new railway programme, the hon. Member said it was quite true that those whom they imperfectly represented in this House, the committees in England which contained men who had given their lives to the study of these questions, were entirely prepared to accept any development of railways in the Balkans, but when they were dealing with a promise of a survey of a railway of singular engineering difficulty, which would take five years in construction, followed by a railway of very much more difficulty, that to San Geovanni, which would take twelve years, they were outside the world of practical politics. In regard to the aid to be given by these means for the amelioration of the condition of the people of these districts, a new situation had been created, which was already being taken advantage of by the Turk, who had already asked that the *gendarmerie* should only continue on their taking service under the Turkish Government, which would mean their disbandment in twenty-four hours, and that the reform programme should be as far as possible curtailed. There was a strained interest in the whole of the Near East with regard to this question, and they were waiting with profoundest interest for the speech of his right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary. In connection with the Balkans, the Balkan Committee regarded the action of Lord Lansdowne with gratitude and satisfaction, but they looked upon the history of the past two years with profoundest disquietude, and that disquietude was reflected throughout the whole of the Near East. At Salonika, Sofia, and Constantinople, they could not understand the comparative cessation of action on the advent of a Liberal Government to power in England. During these last two years at least 5,000 of the population had been done to death, women had suffered indignities worse than death, and children had been burnt alive. Whole villages had been destroyed, and large sections of the land had passed out of cultivation. There had been an enormous exodus of the male population to America. And what was more serious than all these things, serious as they were, was that the people who were murdered and who were still being murdered week by week were men who were not rebels, but chance casual representative members of the peasantry who happened to live in the villages which came under the influence of the devastation of one of the Christian bands, or the rival devastation of the Sultan's troops. There was no security for the civil rights of life and property. Everybody knew that where the elementary right of protection for life and property did not exist the people were seized with fury or despair; the fury which made them take to the hills and become rebels, or the despair which brooded like a black cloud over a great many of these villages to-day. If this would make for European peace, as the noble Lord would have them believe, they might be prepared to accept it—if it was a condition of stable equilibrium. But it was not a condition of stable equilibrium, and if it continued it could only terminate in one way. There had been repeated attempts to neglect a condition of things very similar to this under the idea that the re-opening of the question would lead to European war or insurrection, and in every case it had resulted in insurrection and European war. Even now he had no doubt, from the general information he had received that the men scattered abuot the western quarters of Servia and the back streets of Salonika were saying at the present time as they had said four years ago: "There is only the old inquiry. Is it not better to have an end with horrors than horrors without end?" They made no kind of impeachment of the Foreign Secretary. It was unnecessary, almost impertinent, to make such a statement in this House. They did not know his difficulties in connection with the methods of diplomacy, though they knew they were many and great. Nobody could know them. But what they feared was lest the slow and steady influence of the diplomatic world which thought it best that nothing should be done, and of the official world which thought nothing was worth doing, should check or stifle efforts at reform. A Foreign Minister of one of the countries concerned in this matter, and who wanted support, remarked with a covert sneer that England was now settling down to domestic problems. It sounded kind, but what was really meant by that Minister was that he was no longer being worried by the right hon. Gentleman as Lord Lansdowne had worried him. What he meant was that England was become interested in matters of domestic policy and was ceasing to engage in high politics. If they could restore, as Lord Lansdowne had said, the experiment in reform there would be much to be said for it. The Turks, as everybody knew, were an agreeable and kindly people in ordinary affairs, and if these people could have been left alone to make their own terms with the Turks their condition might have been better; but they were not. The House had often been told that things which seemed to them to be profoundly illiberal had to be done on the ground that continuity of foreign policy should be ensured. They now respectfully asked that when a Conservative Minister had set out on a Liberal foreign policy a Liberal Foreign Minister should pledge himself that continuity should follow. The policy started by the late Government could not now be truncated. The honour and prestige of the country were concerned. The people of Bulgaria thought that the people of England were not only in the Concert but had been leading it. And they regarded the present position as an insult—as a slap in the face for England. They asked for no more than a continuance of the Lansdowne policy, for an effective policing of the disturbed regions by a *gendarmerie* in which the European officers were no longer made the laughing-stock of the world, but were given some effective control, with control of the financial and judicial arrangements given to the International Commission now sitting in Salonika. They did not believe the resources of the British Empire were so scanty as some Imperialists would have them believe. Lord Lansdowne had been quite willing to avail himself of what even now was still believed to be the strong co-operation in the way of a suggested appeal through Governments, who wished to do nothing but who had large Slav populations, to those Slav populations behind them who were profoundly interested in the Slavs of Macedonia. He believed we had an asset in that profound friendship, trust, and confidence in England which existed at the present time in some of the Balkan States, where, in strange and sometimes pathetic fashion, Englishmen were shown that the people were still ready to believe that the England of Gladstone was not yet dead. At the present time we had alliances and understandings which Lord Lansdowne had not when he first started this policy, and we had at our back the greatest instrument of destruction the world had ever seen. It was with these weapons that he asked that continuity should be observed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): My hon. friend who has just sat down has spoken with a force and feeling and with an impressive sincerity of manner of the misery he has seen during his recent visit to Macedonia. I will not for one moment detract from the sombre force with which he painted for the House the situation as he saw it. Nor will I detract for one moment from his suggestion that if that situation is continued worse consequences than we have yet known must come from it. But I do think that when he places upon the present Government, or rather upon me personally, the heavy load of the responsibility for the situation during the last two years he is unjust. We have pursued the policy of Lord Lansdowne. My hon. friend said that if Lord Lansdowne had been in office during the last two years he would have realized results which we have failed to secure. How can my hon. friend prove a statement of that kind?

MR. MASTERMAN: I said it was only an opinion. I did not make it as an assertion.

SIR EDWARD GREY: My hon. friend declared with emphasis that Lord Lansdowne was earnest and strenuous in the matter of Macedonian reform. Does it not occur to him that it is just possible that we, who succeeded Lord Lansdowne, might fail in obtaining those particular results which Lord Lansdowne himself was unable to achieve? The noble Lord did achieve the maximum which could be achieved with the consent of the other Powers, working through the Concert. What was the situation upon which we entered? It was this. The effort which had been made under Lord Lansdowne, working through the Concert, and obtaining the maximum results which, as I have said, had been obtained by his policy, was exhausted, and we took up the situation at that very moment. The naval demonstration which had been originated when Lord Lansdowne was in office was in progress for the purpose of securing the establishment of the Financial Commission, and when that demonstration came to an end it left the Concert, not stimulated to further efforts, but exhausted by the effort it had made. The naval demonstration was not a very whole-hearted affair. The utmost was obtained from it that could be obtained. But when that one result was obtained from it it would have been impossible for Lord Lansdowne, or any one else, to have strung the Concert up to the pitch of making another effort for a considerable period of time. That was the moment when we came into office. But that was not all. Not only was that the condition of the Concert, but before the Financial Commission had been obtained the hope had been held out by Lord Lansdowne that if the Commission were granted we should agree to a 3 per cent. increase in the Turkish Customs. My position for the first months, consequently, was this. The Turkish Government claimed as a right, having granted the Financial Commission, that we should carry out the engagement, as they alleged it to be, to concede the 3 per cent. increase in the duties, and some of the other Powers came to us pointing out that if we did not concede the increase the whole scheme of financing the reforms in Macedonia would be endangered. I was not prepared to accept the statement that Lord Lansdowne's engagement had been as absolute as it was said it was. But that was the plea advanced by the Turkish Government, and that was the pressure put upon me by some of the Powers in the Concert. It seemed to me that there were further conditions with regard to Macedonia to be stipulated for before we conceded that increase. That position I assumed and maintained for many months under considerable pressure both from the Turkish Government on the one side and from some of the Powers of the Concert on the other side. So long as that situation existed—so long as we did not give way on the 3 per cent. increase, it was absolutely futile to put forward any other proposal to the other Powers. Their answers would have been, had we asked them at any moment to press further proposals forward: "Concede the 3 per cent. increase first, or else, so far from getting any further proposals, the measure already agreed upon will be endangered." That was our position for many months. It was not till the summer of last year that the 3 per. cent. on the Customs duties was arranged. During the whole of that time we had taken the initiative with regard to the conditions of Macedonian reform. During the whole of that time we had borne the burden and the heat of the day. Not until we could secure certain further conditions with regard to Macedonian reform, including, by the way, for the Financial Commission an effective control of the Civil Budget, was the 3 per cent. increase to be conceded. Directly that was arranged we began to show our interest in the question of judicial reforms; and, finding that Austria and Russia were willing to put forward a scheme of judicial reforms, we did one of the things Lord Lansdowne always said he was willing to do—we left the initiative to them provided they were prepared to propose something practical. That was always one branch of Lord Landowne's policy. In order to secure union in the Concert he was prepared to leave it to them to put forward reforms if they were willing, but reserving the right to make any other proposals he thought fit. We left the initiative to Austria and Russia with regard to judicial reforms, although we did take in the discussion of these reforms an active part in Constantinople to insure that the reforms should be proposed on a footing likely to be effective and satisfactory. We did not stop there. While the judicial reform proposals were being elaborated, crimes of violence and outrage in Macedonia were increasing. The greater proportion of them—not the whole—were committed by bands of rival nationalities upon each other. The British Ambassador at Constantinople last summer, about the time that I received a deputation at the Foriegn Office on the subject, pressed on the Sultan earnestly that he should concentrate his efforts upon the increased evil done by these bands in Macedonia, and that he should use the instrument which Europe had put ready to his hand—the *gendarmerie* with the European officers—to clear the country of these bands. The proposal was received well enough, but nothing came of it, and we then went on to take the initiative in putting the proposal that the *gendarmerie* should be increased, that mobile columns should be formed, and that the European officers should be given executive control. We have taken the initiative in making that proposal. The noble Lord warned me of the danger of putting forward proposals without having made sure that the other Powers were ready to accept them. I agree with what my noble friend has said, that Lord Lansdowne was not bound by any limitation of that kind. I have been constantly criticised by my noble friend's speech for not having secured what Lord Lansdowne had put forward but failed to secure. The situation in Macedonia in our opinion was so bad, and what is even more, the prospect of that situation was so bad, that it was absolutely necessary that some proposal likely to be effective in touching the real evil in Macedonia—the crimes of violence by bands—should be put forward without further delay, and so we put it forward. That is, in brief, the history of our action in the last two years. Can any one point to the action of any Power who has done more or any Power who has done so much? What opportunity have we missed for putting forward any proposal that the other Powers were likely to accept? Not one. If that be so, then I maintain that there is no ground for complaint that we have not been alive to the honourable obligations of this country. We have not only within the last two years, but before that, borne our share and more of the responsibility of the Treaty of Berlin, and borne it without counting the cost to ourselves either in political interest or commercial advantage. And when you ask the British Government to justify the action of the Concert, I will ask hon. Members to bear in mind that if you are a member of a Concert you do not recommend yourselves to your colleagues, you do not increase your influence with them, by boasting of your own action within the Concert. It seems to me that too often, when we are criticised for not being active enough, those who criticise us desire that we should demonstrate publicly that but for us and our action nothing would have been done at all. Even if that were true, it would diminish your influence if you made a boast of it. My hon. friend who seconded the Motion sketched out a policy of action within the Concert. I admit his sincerity in sketching out that policy; but I would ask anyone whether the policy he sketched out did not show how very difficult it is to adjust a policy within the Concert such as he described. Because the policy which he adumbrated was one of buying off one Power, ignoring another, and making special allowances to the third. How can you suppose that the Concert would remain a useful instrument if you adopt that plan? On one point I should like to be quite clear. It is constantly suggested in this place that we have to prove our earnestness to the Powers by giving them to understand that a disagreeable consequence will follow if what we consider necessary is not done. My hon. friend said that we had too great a reputation for being attached to peace. Ought we to go so far as to say that if we cannot get our way in the Concert we are prepared to precipitate a catastrophe? Does anybody suggest that we should give the other Powers to understand that if they will not do what we think necessary in the question we are prepared to take separate action ourselves? If so, no doubt you have a formidable lever, but are you prepared to accept the consequence? I should like to be quite clear on this point. I do not believe separate action by this country—isolated action, breaking away from the Concert—would be effective in settling the question of Macedonia, and I do believe that it would plunge us, to begin with, and others after us, into difficulties of which nobody can foresee the end. You may easily, by separate action, set loose forces the consequences of which would be entirely beyond your own control, because this is not as simple a problem as, for instance, the Bulgarian problem was years ago. It is not a question now of liberating a unit, setting it free to develop itself. Macedonia is not a unit—it is a geographical expression. The very statements made by those who have brought this Motion before the House, as to the mischiefs done by the bands against each other, are an admission that the problem you have to deal with is not one of liberation, but one of securing better government under exceedingly difficult circumstances. What you have to provide for in Macedonia is not a unit which is in a position to govern and develop itself, and become a homogeneous unit if it has liberty—what you have to do is to arrange some system under which the different sections of the population shall be saved from each other. That is an exceedingly complicated problem. Unless you are going to establish some kind of order under such exceedingly difficult conditions, it is not enough to take separate action—it will throw the whole thing into confusion. I am convinced of this—that if we were to take separate action in the Macedonian question, separate action, which means forcible action, resorting to force ourselves, we might begin with the Macedonian question, but nobody can say with what question such action as that might end. Therefore I rule separate action out of the question, both because of the consequences it might have and because it could not be effective. If that be so, what ought our policy to be inside the Concert? I should like it to be recognised a little more than it is—I only say this in passing for a reason I will explain—that the Financial Commission and the *gendarmerie* have done more good in the country than they are credited with. The good they have done is more than counterbalanced by the other evils which have arisen since they were first asked for—that I admit. I do not wish to qualify that in any way. But the Financial Commission has improved the collection of the finances, it has improved the drawing up of the Budget, and the *gendarmerie* has improved the detection and the suppression of ordinary crime. I should like that to be recognised, because when you have men like Mr. Graves on the Financial Commission, and Colonel Bonham in the *gendarmerie*, I think it is only fair that in their own country there should be recognition that the work they are doing is not entirely thrown away, and credit should be given to their work. And, of course, I trust that other foreign officers and representatives on the Financial Commission who belong to other countries find the same recognition of their good work amongst their own people. But I admit that all the good that can be done by the presence of those people is outweighed by the continuance of disorder and insecurity and the kind of violence of which we have heard. For the Bulgarian and Servian Governments to do all in their power to suppress the formation of bands outside Macedonia, that pressure which has been exercised by ourselves and other Powers, must, in my opinion, continue to be exercised whenever there is occasion. It is exceedingly difficult to drive that pressure home, because each Government in turn says that it is doing its best to prevent bands forming in its own territory and crossing into other countries, and points, each in turn, with some degree of truth, to the fact that the outrages credited to its own nationality in Macedonia are in retaliation for others committed on some previous occasion. All I can say is this, that our sympathy with the small nationalities remains undiminished, but the surest way for any of those nationalities to retain the sympathy of this country is to do its utmost within its own territory to restrain and prevent the formation of these bands which cross over into Macedonia. And, even if all these Governments did their best, if they did all in their power to discourage the formation of bands and the passage of bands from their own territory into Macedonia, even so the question would be far from solved, because what is absolutely necessary is that in Macedonia itself there should be vigorous, effective, and impartial action by the authorities in the country. Till you have that you cannot be successful. I have spoken hitherto largely of our own action within the Concert. I now come to what has been called the new situation, which has been developed in the Concert generally by recent events. The contemplation of that situation is perhaps the most important subject we have before us at the present moment. Everyone who has read the Press in the last fortnight will be aware that a new situation has arisen from the railway project which has lately received an Iradé from the Sultan. Our attitude towards these railway projects taken as railway projects by themselves is, and should be, one of benevolent neutrality. Some of them are rival schemes. I see no reason why we should be entangled in support of one rival railway scheme as against another rival railway scheme; nor do I see why we should take in hand to oppose one in order to favour another. We are favourable to any railway development which is likely to promote general trade and develop the country, and, therefore, so far as that particular point is concerned, taken by itself and on its merits, I do not see that we are very greatly concerned. But this latest railway project, launched as it was on its present stage at a very critical moment in the history of Macedonian reforms, has undoubtedly been the occasion of very marked comment, not only in this country, but wherever an interest is taken in Macedonian reforms. That this special moment should be chosen for promoting a large railway scheme which requires the Sultan's consent was sure to excite apprehension lest individual Powers within the Concert should be turning their attention to objects specially adapted to their interests, which they have a perfect right to do, but lest they should be doing it at the expense of Macedonian reform. Any impression of that kind must produce a most unfortunate effect on public opinion generally in the Balkans, at Constantinople, and on the Concert itself. I should regret exceedingly that any such impression should gain ground, because I wish to see the Concert maintained for Macedonian reforms. Besides that, it is a guarantee for peace. Surely the comments in the Press in the last fortnight have made it clear how very slight a thing may put the Macedonian question on one side, and raise other questions in its place. In discussing the Macedonian question you are never far from the Turkish question. The Turkish question has more than once led to a European war. As long as the Concert exists you have a certain guarantee that that question will not lead to war at the present time; but if the Concert disappears you can no longer feel the certainty you have to-day, that the different Powers interested in the Near East will long continue to keep in touch with each other. Once they lose touch with each other you cannot tell what misunderstandings may creep in between them nor to what extent those misunderstandings may go on. It would be most unfortunate if individual Powers in the Concert were to become more concerned with their relations to each other than they were with the problem of Macedonian reform. That would change the Concert from an instrument of Macedonian reform, which to a certain extent it has been, and which I trust and believe it still will be, into a diplomatic manœuvreing ground. So I would ask is the apprehension that the mere launching of this or another railway scheme has really affected the Concert adversely well-founded? I trust not, but I do feel that it is incumbent on the Powers in the Concert, after all that has passed, to make it clear that there is no ground for such an apprehension; and I welcome the signs which we have seen lately that the Powers are more impressed than ever with the bad state of things in Macedonia and the gravity of the situation. In Baron d'Aehrenthal's speech the other day, though there may not have been much light as to the remedies to be applied in Macedonia, there was no glossing over the seriousness of the situation. In fact, in the communications from the other Powers in the last fortnight there has been an emphasis laid by them on the serious state of things in Macedonia which has been more emphatic and more impressive than anything we have had from some of them before. There is ample reason for this. The outrages in Macedonia, compared with the corresponding period of last year, have increased, and if they have increased at this period of the year the prospect is bad indeed when the spring and summer comes. Though I welcome the fact that the Powers are disposed to emphasise the seriousness of the situation—to emphasise the danger is only to emphasise the need of a remedy. It does not take us any further that the Powers should be in agreement that the situation is very bad unless the admission that the situation is very bad is to be followed by practical suggestions for its improvement. Now judicial reforms are very desirable, but they will not pacify the country and they do not touch the immediate evil of the bands. I was asked in what condition they were at the present moment. For a long time we have been ready to sign the Note as to judicial reforms before the other Powers were agreed to sign it. But there has been a hesitation to sign the Note, arising, I believe, from the conviction that the increasing evils in Macedonia are not those which will be directly affected by judicial reforms even if carried out, and that therefore they are a reform which, while meeting with opposition at Constantinople, will not be effectual in pacifying the country. Therefore, although desirable, and an object to be pursued, they would not by themselves, unless accompanied by some different measures, effect the result which we desire. But then the Powers are pressing for a renewal of the mandates of the Financial Commission and the civil agents. Of course, that ought to go without saying. The renewal of the mandates is in effect a condition necessary to the carrying out of the conditions of the 3 per cent. increase of Customs. If these are to be refused, those conditions are ripped up, but even when mandates are renewed, you are only continuing the present state of things, and not making an advance. Then as to the *gendarmerie* proposal which we have made. The Powers have replied to the proposal, not all in the same terms, but some of them, at any rate, considering it to be impracticable or inopportune; and to others, of course, the proposal must be inopportune which does not commend itself to the whole of the Powers. I do not believe that the proposal will be impracticable provided that it has the goodwill of the Turkish authorities in Macedonia; and whether it has or not depends on the earnestness and union of the Concert in pressing it on the consideration of the Turkish Government. I believe that no proposal could be more in the interests of the Sultan himself. There is the instrument ready to his hand with which the country can be pacified; and I cannot conceive any derogation to his prestige, dignity, or authority in consenting to make use of a *gendarmerie* under European officers. I am asked whether the proposal has dropped. Of course, we are not going to press that, or any other proposal, against the opposition of other Powers in the Concert—we are not going to press it to the extent of separate action. But we are going to reply to the answers which we have had from the Powers; and when we have settled that reply, I should propose to lay before the House what our *gendarmerie* proposal actually was, what the reply from the Powers was, and what our answer to that reply has been. Meanwhile, the proposal remains, and can be taken up at any time. I should be delighted to see the proposal dropped on one condition—and that is that a better suggestion is made by any other Power. We have no *amour propre* in the matter ourselves. We are perfectly ready at any time to abandon any proposal of our own, if any of the Powers will come forward with any other proposal which will be likely to be more effective or as effective and which recommends itself more to the Concert as a whole, because I am convinced that the Macedonian problem can be settled if the Concert will only seriously take it in hand. Lord Lansdowne, as the noble Lord said, made more than one proposal, and, amongst others, he suggested a Turkish Governor. If a Turkish Governor were appointed for a fixed term of years—a man whose character and capacity were accepted and recognised by the Powers—and if he had a free hand and his position were secure, I believe that the whole Macedonian question might be solved. Under secure and effective administration such as that everything that has been done already—the Financial Commission and the *gendarmerie*—would have the fullest use made of it; the reforms that are already in existence would spring into full life and the country, I am convinced, would be swept of bands and pacified.

MR. MASTERMAN: Under what authority is that proposed? You say a Turkish governor in a position of independence or under some authority. Responsible to whom?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I said a Turkish Governor, whose character and capacity were recognised and accepted by the Powers—I mean a Governor appointed with the consent of the Powers, irremovable without their consent, and secure in his appointment for a term of years. I am not putting that forward as a definite proposal to which we ourselves are pledged. I am reviewing the general situation in Macedonia, and I say that our *gendarmerie* proposal is there for consideration, but that we keep an open mind for every suggestion or proposal which is likely, to commend itself to the Concert, and, among others, to this, which, if not entirely Lord Lansdowne's suggestion, at any rate, would be suggested to anyone who had read Lord Lansdowne's own suggestion with regard to the Governor. But if the administration is to be effective, there must be a large reduction of the Turkish troops at present kept in the country, throwing a tremendous financial strain upon it. Would a suggestion of that kind be so impossible as some people may suppose? I see no reason why a Turkish Governor appointed under satisfactory conditions should not be a Mussulman, provided his character and position and powers are satisfactory. I see no reason whatever, because this is no religious squabble. I see no reason why, under a satisfactory system of that kind, the foreign officers in Macedonia should not all be, as some of them are now, placed upon the Macedonian Budget, instead of being paid by the Powers direct. And, if there were to be a large reduction of the Turkish force, of course some security must be given that the reduction of the Turkish troops will not be taken advantage of by invasion from outside. It means that while any arrangement of that kind lasted, and as long as it was working satisfactorily, the Powers would have to give a collective guarantee that Turkish dominion should not be interfered with from outside—a guarantee of external security. The greatest weakness of Turkey itself is the continuance of the present Macedonian difficulty. Any settlement which would relieve the financial strain in Macedonia and which would pacify the country would bring Turkey political security and a guarantee of its integrity, neither of which can be too safe, either of which may be placed in danger if the Macedonian situation continues as it is. And under any satisfactory administration of that kind in Macedonia the provocation to rival bands to retaliate upon each other would cease. The risk of action by the bands would become so great under an effective use of troops or *gendarmerie* that they would not undertake it. And under any settlement of that sort, which was adopted for a term of years, the temptation to the different nationalities to press their own interests or to establish their own claims in Macedonia by violent action would be diminished, because they could no longer regard the Macedonian situation, as many of them do now, as incapable of solution. The danger to the European Concert at the present moment is not the danger from differences or quarrels between the Powers themselves. The danger to the Concert is not, I think, that the individual Powers who are in it are going to differ and fall out with each other, but I do think that the danger is that the Concert itself might perish for lack of vitality. The record of the last two years has been a record of comparative failure. Failure in itself is a most disintegrating force, and the Concert which has come into existence to secure Macedonian reform cannot, without peril to its existence, allow the years to go by and lie under the imputation of failure. Some degree, at any rate, of success is necessary to it in order to keep it together. The negotiations which must be consequent on our *gendarmerie* proposals will show what vitality the Concert has. It cannot prove its vitality by nagging and grinding away at small things which only irritate the Turks without doing any good. Small amendments of and tinkering at the Mürzsteg programme will not improve the situation. With things as they are in Macedonia anything which is less than a real remedy can be but little better than a farce. Both under Lord Lansdowne and for the last two years since the present Government has been in office Great Britain has been an active, loyal, earnest, and disinterested member of the Concert. But if good results are to follow from continuing that *rôle,* the work of the Concert must be directed to things which are not trivial or paper reforms, but which will be substantial and effective. We are rapidly ariving at that point when the Concert must either justify itself or stultify itself by its action. Macedonia, if it continues to be neglected, must sooner or later provoke a catastrophe. The situation can be remedied without precipitating a catastrophe, but it can only be by decided and united action on the part of the Powers themselves. Union in the Concert is not enough by itself. Union and determination must be combined, and neither should be sacrificed to the other; and we, for our part, shall continue in the Concert to do our utmost to secure that both union and determination are promoted.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether, after the speech delivered by the right hon. Gentleman, it is proposed to proceed to a division. [" No."] I should hope not. Under the circumstances, I can only say that if there had been a division I should have supported the right hon. Gentleman.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Whiteley*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes before Eleven o'clock

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 26th February, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Standing Orders Committee—Report from, that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed, provided that Tramways 3, 4, and 5 be struck out of the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for an additional provision in the London County Council (Tramways and Improvements) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to the Committee on the Bill to insert the additional provision.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Thames River Steamboat Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [H.L.] ought to be dispensed with, and the Bill allowed to proceed.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Dover Graving Docks Bill; and the Lower Thames (Grays) Dock Bill ought to be dispensed with.

And that the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Malvern Hills Bill [H.L.] ought not to be dispensed with.

Read, and agreed to.

Croydon and Southern District Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Presented, and read 1^a.

West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.]. Presented, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Swansea Valley Gas Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Crystal Palace Company Bill [H.L.]; Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.]; Taff Vale Railway Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.]; Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.] Report from the Committee of Selection, that the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz), E. Westmorland, E. Graham (*D. Montrose*), E. Cranbrook, V. Hood, L. Sanderson (chairman); agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Tuesday the 10th of March, at Eleven o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

Transfer of Training Colleges (Scotland) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]. Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Clyde Navigation (Superannuation) Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.] Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

FRANCE No. 1 (1908).

Report, by the Hon. Reginald Lister, His Majesty's Minister at Paris, upon the French Colonies.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 25th February 1908, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account of the gross amount of all bank annuities and any annuities for terms of years, transferred, and of all sums of money paid to the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, and the gross amount of annuities for lives and for terms of years which have been granted for the same, and contracts for payments on death which have been made within the year ended 5th January, 1908: Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons. Read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Tuesday, the 10th of March next. (No. 22).

EARL ROSEBERY: When does the Government propose to take the Second Reading of the Bill?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): As I said yesterday, I had hoped to do so next week, but, while I do not propose to suggest any postponement beyond a few days, as I have other work to do, and it is really not my legitimate business to promote Land Bills in this House, I should like a few days longer interval. If the beginning of the following week would suit the convenience of the House I would hope to bring the Bill forward then.

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION.

*LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, before the commencement of public business I ask leave to make a very brief personal statement with regard to a Paper which was circulated to your Lordships with the Parliamentary Papers this morning. It is an extract from a despatch written by the Government of India in my day to the Secretary of State, relating to British policy in Persia. It is dated 21st September, 1899. Your Lordships may remember that the noble Earl opposite (the Earl of Crewe) in the debate on the Anglo-Russian Convention, referred to this despatch with the object of arguing that the Government of India had committed themselves therein to an expression of opinion about the respective limits of the British and Russian spheres of influence in Persia which precluded me from passing the criticisms on the Anglo-Russian Convention that I had done. I thought at the time and I think still that it was a most irregular, and, if I may say so in the face of the noble Earl, who is so remarkable for his courtesy, an improper proceeding, that any one of His Majesty's Ministers should, without notice, suddenly in public debate, for the purpose of debating advantages, quote a passage from a confidential despatch of the nature of that to which I have referred. It will be remembered that I at once challenged the representation of my views given by the noble Earl, and asked him to lay the Paper on the Table.

That is the history of this document. I may say at once that I accept the fullest responsibility for it, because I wrote the despatch myself. The argument of the noble Earl was that in this despatch the Indian Government had intimated their opinion as to the proper limits of the Russian sphere in Persia; secondly, that that sphere included the trade route running from Baghdad by way of Khanikin and Kermanshah to Teheran; thirdly, that it included Yezd; fourthly, that it passed through Kerman to a point north of Seistan; and fifthly, that the Russians consequently would have obtained under this proposal a sphere of influence larger than that conceded to them under the treaty. A reference to this despatch will reveal that not one of those propositions can be sustained. As a matter of fact the Government of India in this despatch were not discussing a Russian sphere at all. They had been asked by the Secretary of State to give their opinion on a proposal which had emanated from Sir Mortimer Durand, the British Minister in Persia, with regard to the northern limits of the British sphere, both political and commercial, in Persia. Secondly, so far from including in the Russian sphere the trade route of which I have spoken, we used these words: "On no account ought we to forfeit British supremacy in this trade route"—a supremacy at that time reflected by an annual trade of about £1,000,000. Thirdly, of Ispahan, I said that it must on every ground be included in the zone in which British interests are supreme. Fourthly, we even said that Sir Mortimer Durand's line which stopped at Ispahan ought to be amended so as to include Kashan, a place more than 100 miles north of Ispahan, and that it would be unwise in British interests for any Russian railway to penetrate to any point south of that town. Fifthly, our line included Yezd. Sixthly, we expressed no opinion in this despatch about the boundary north of Seistan beyond pointing out that there was no natural or geographical line of division there, and that this would be a difficulty that would have to be borne in mind by His Majesty's Government in discussing the matter with Russia. Throughout the despatch the Government of India stated over and over again, with an insistence that cannot be denied, that the regions of Central and Southern Persia, to which by the treaty Russia has been brought down, should be, and should remain, because of our interests there, inside the British sphere. I hope

I have said enough to show that the spirit of our argument and indeed, the strongest individual points in it were no doubt unintentionally misrepresented by the noble Earl.

I am well aware that the matter is not one of general interest, and I do not desire to push it; but inasmuch as the reference to the despatch emanated in the first place from the noble Earl, and his representation of the case stands on record, I had no alternative but to ask that the Paper should be laid, and to make this brief statement on the subject.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I am greatly obliged to the noble Lord for having given me private notice of his intention to raise this matter, which, while of no great general interest, is of some importance both to him and to me. I will not attempt to argue as to the propriety or impropriety of the action I took, but I think it will be generally conceded that a Minister has the right to quote from a State Paper if he is prepared to lay that Paper on the Table of the House. There is a peculiarly disagreeable form of argument in which I am sure the noble Lord will acquit me of engaging. It consists in accusing a person of something he has never done, or imputing to him opinions he could not possibly hold, and then demanding his gratitude on the ground that you have given him an opportunity of contradicting the statement. I am sure the noble Lord will not accuse me of any action of that kind if I say that I am glad he has had an opportunity of contradicting the statement I made; because my right hon. friend Sir Edward Grey and I did form an entirely different interpretation of the noble Lord's meaning in this despatch from that which he has stated to the House. It used to be stated of the late Mr. Browning that admirers of his poems were in the habit of applying to him as to the meaning of difficult passages in them, and he generally answered that no doubt he knew what he meant when he wrote them, but at the time of receiving the request he had entirely forgotten what the real meaning might be. We are much more fortunate, in that we have had a detailed statement from the noble Lord as to what his meaning really was. The statement on which I founded what I said was this—

> "Sir Mortimer Durand has drawn a line across Persia from Khanikin on the Turkish frontier on the west, through Kermanshah, Hamadan, Ispahan, Yezd, and Kerman to Seistan and the Afghan frontier on the east, as indicating approximately the British and Russian spheres of influence, both political and commercial, in Persia."

That passage having appeared in the despatch without note or comment, we assumed it was the view taken by the noble Lord, subject to the correction at a later stage in which he said—

> "In any case we should recommend that the line of partition suggested by Sir Mortimer Durand should be so far amended as to substitute Kashan for Ispahan."

If I remember right, I think I particularly said that Ispahan was not included in the line the noble Lords' Government appeared to favour.

The terms, I think, are open to misapprehension, because when you say a line is drawn through these important places, I admit it is exceedingly difficult to say in which sphere they are supposed to be included; for it is hardly conceivable that half of each town should be under the influence of one Government and half under another. But when I went on to say that in some respects I considered this arrangement a less satisfactory one than that which we proposed, I meant that, looking at the two lines drawn on the map, it was perfectly evident that the Durand line, if I may so call it, runs as regards the Russian sphere at a distinctly more obtuse angle than the line of the Russian sphere as drawn by our Agreement, and the argument I used was that the British and neutral spheres together, as compared with the British and Russian spheres mentioned in the despatch, at any rate so far as the Afghan frontier was concerned, showed a greater advantage from the British point of view. I most fully accept the interpretation of the despatch as having been what the noble Lord meant when he was writing on behalf of the Government of India, and I can only say further that I had not the faintest intention of misrepresenting the noble Lord, but that the misconstruction arose from some degree of obscurity in its wording.

LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON, who had given notice of his intention to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the autograph promise of the Shah of Persia given to His Majesty's Government in March, 1889, and repeated on several occasions at a later date, that Great Britain should have priority in the construction of any southern railway to Teheran, that if concessions for railways were given to others in the north, a similar concession should be granted to an English company in the south, and that no southern railway concession in Persia should be granted to any foreign company without consultation with His Majesty's Government, which promise was referred to by Lord Cranborne in the House of Commons on 18th February, 1903, and by the Marquess of Lansdowne in the House of Lords on 5th May, 1903, is still regarded by His Majesty's Government as operative, or whether it has been abrogated or modified by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 31st August, 1907, said: My Lords, at the request of the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs I beg to postpone this Question to some day next week.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord FITZMAURICE): I have to thank the noble Lord for postponing the Question. I asked for a postponement because I did not see the Question on the Paper until yesterday, and owing to the great pressure of the debate on Macedonia it was really impossible for me to prepare the answer for to-day.

INDIA—NORTH-WEST FRONTIER POLICY.

*LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON rose to ask His Majesty's Government in connection with the expedition against the Zakka Khel Afridis, whether the general policy that has been pursued towards the tribes upon the North-West frontier of India since 1899 is likely to be modified or affected by this expedition. The noble Lord said: My Lords, in asking this question I cannot refrain from drawing attention to the fact—the anomaly, as I regard it—that there is no permanent or official spokesman of the India Office in this House. I believe I am to have the honour of being followed this evening by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and assuredly there is no man in this House who, from the wide range of his experience, has a greater right to speak on the frontier affairs of India; but the accident that the noble Earl is here and is willing and so singularly qualified to act as spokesman surely does not dispense His Majesty's Ministers from giving us a permanent official representative of the India Office in this House. It has been, not the unbroken custom, because there was a short time during which Lord Percy was Under-Secretary for India in the House of Commons, in the time of Lord George Hamilton, but the almost invariable practice for what I may call the great external Departments of the Government, that is to say, Foreign Affairs, India and the Colonies, to be officially represented in both Houses of Parliament, the Secretary of State in one House and the Under-Secretary of State in the other; and for my own part—I hope I do not hold exaggerated views—I regard it as uncomplimentary to India, and almost disrespectful to your Lordships' House, that we should not be thought good enough to have a permanent representative of the India Office here. At present both representatives of the India Office are Members of the House of Commons; but it cannot be contended that the presence of the Under-Secretary is indispensable there, inasmuch as for some months past he has been wandering about India at the head of a Royal Commission, engaged in the endeavour to decentralise the government of India. As he can be so easily spared from the House of Commons, it seems to me that the work of decentralisation of government might very well have begun a little nearer home, and that from the serried ranks of noble Lords opposite, some enthusiastic and enterprising lieutenant might have been selected to hold aloft the banner of India in this House.

Now I pass to the Question of which notice appears on the Paper. An expedition is at the present moment proceeding in the mountainous country that lies to the west of Peshawar on the North-West frontier, against one of the most turbulent and treacherous of the frontier clans—the Zakka Khel Afridis. Every morning we read of the movements of our troops, of the destruction of villages, the blowing up of towers, and occasionally of a very lamentable sacrifice of British lives. I have little to say about the expedition itself. It is a very small affair, which has been absurdly magnified in the Press. We are only doing upon this section of the frontier what we have been called upon to do scores of times before, and what, so long as there is a North-West frontier and it is inhabited by the Pathan tribes, we shall have to do scores of times again. Under the able commander selected to control the expedition, Sir James Willcocks, and with the military authority and experience behind him, I have no doubt the expedition will be conducted as ably and expeditiously as possible. For my own part I limit my reference to the expedition itself to saying that I wish for it the most rapid, most complete, and most inexpensive success.

I think it would be most unfair to criticise either His Majesty's Government or the Government of India for the policy or the fact of this expedition. If there is a body of men, if there is a responsible Government in the world that is apt to exhibit almost illimitable patience in the face of extreme frontier provocation and to push that attitude to the point of procrastination and almost of weakness, it is the Government of India. It is with the utmost difficulty that, in the face of almost incessant raids, you can persuade the Government of India to act, and the reason is that, as the noble Earl knows so well, even a petty frontier expedition is not an agreeable experience either for the Administration that authorises it or for the soldiers who have to take part in it. We have to go into a country forbidding, difficult, and inaccessible to a degree; we are dealing with an enemy habituated to every form and habit of guerilla warfare in the hills. Nobody, when an expedition is started, can possibly foresee what form or development it may ultimately assume, and, even if attended with the maximum of success, no very striking or permanent results can be obtained. Therefore, the Government of India has always shrunk from, and, I think, rightly shrunk from, embarking upon any policy of this description.

But, in the present instance the case for the expedition seems to me to be absolutely unanswerable. When a tribe that is inside the British political frontier, which is in receipt of subsidies supposed to be an acknowledgment of its good behaviour, which has no legitimate cause of complaint, which is not at enmity with ourselves, nevertheless out of "sheer cussedness," or what the late Mr. Gladstone would have described as "original sin," persists in attacking and killing British subjects, destroying British villages, driving off British cattle, and even executing a most daring and successful raid into the great walled town of Peshawar, I say that when such a combination of circumstances occurs, any Secretary of State and any Government of India that did not immediately undertake reprisals would have been unworthy of their position and name. The only criticisms I should be at all disposed to offer upon events so far as they have taken place would be, first, that it seems to me that the police arrangements on our side of the frontier which admitted of these daring and successful raids must have been rather defective; secondly, that the cup of the Zakka Khel, now regarded as brimming over, has in reality been full for the best part of a year, and that, in all probability, the Government, instead of striking now ought to have struck nearly a year ago; and, thirdly, that the expedition was unfortunately so thoroughly well advertised in advance that all chance of a surprise must have vanished even before our troops marched out of Peshawar. My own experience in India was that the success of reprisals was in proportion to the speed and unexpectedness of the attack delivered. Possibly there may have been circumstances unknown to me in the present case which rendered a rapid concentration of troops, or a sudden dash across the frontier, impossible; but the fact remains that there has been no element of surprise about the matter at all. Subject to these criticisms, which are of a very minor character, I have nothing whatever to say against the expediency of this expedition; it seems to me thoroughly justified, while, on the military aspect of the case, I am quite content to leave the matter to the judgment of the expert authorities in India, who know just about as much of the tactics of the tribes and the geography of the frontier as we in this House know about the tactics of the Whips and the lobbies of your Lordships' House.

A much more important question is however raised when we proceed to consider the part this expedition is intended to play, or is likely to play, in the general scheme of frontier policy in India, and the degree to which its consequences have been thought out by those who authorised it. This question can be considered in a narrower and in a wider aspect. The former is almost entirely strategical in character. I gather from the papers that the expedition has entered the Bazar Valley, a valley lying to the south of the Khyber Pass, where the troops are engaged in the demolition of stone breastworks, in the destruction of towers, and generally in making things as uncomfortable as possible for the Zakka Khel. But the Bazar Valley where the troops are is not the main or the largest place of settlement of the Zakka Khel Afridis. As the noble Earl knows very well, their settlement extends over the greater part of the Bara Valley south of the Bazar Valley, a much larger area and much more inaccessible because of the difficulty of the passes. Not only so, but the Zakka Khel settlements extend over the whole of Tirah, the region in the mountains on the frontier which gave its name to the campaigns of 1896-7. I have no knowledge of the plans of the Government or of the military commanders responsible for the expedition, and I should be the last man to press for information which the noble Earl may consider it undesirable or inexpedient to give. I am sure that His Majesty's Government must be as anxious as any one can be to contract the area of their responsibilities in this case, for everyone familiar with frontier warfare in India knows that the further afield you go the greater is the chance of extending the area of conflagration with its dangerous consequences. All I ask the noble Earl to tell us (if he thinks it desirable to do so), therefore, is whether His Majesty's Government have found it in their power to place, or are likely soon to find it in their power to place, any geographical limits to the operations of our troops.

I now turn to the much larger issue, the bearing of this expedition upon our frontier policy as a whole. The question I have put upon the Paper is "whether the general policy that has been pursued towards the tribes upon the North-West frontier of India since 1899 is likely to be modified or affected by this expedition." It is now twelve years ago since the first of these risings took place on the frontier, which spread like wildfire north and south, and presently involved the whole frontier in a conflagration which was only extinguished by the long series of military operations described as the Tirah campaign. When I went out to India and took over from the noble Lord at the beginning of 1899, the campaign was at an end, and he will remember that the first duty which devolved upon the new Government of India was to endeavour to construct some rational plan of settlement which should be in accordance with the lines laid down by the then Secretary of State, Lord G. Hamilton, and which should, if possible, rest on general principles of more than transitory application with regard to the frontier. The question that confronted us at that time was one of the most difficult any Government could have to deal with. In the case of the Indian frontier you are dealing with tribes that differ very materially in racial and personal characteristics, and the degree of civilisation or non-civilisation they have attained; but they are united in certain common features, every man of them from boyhood upwards being inured to a life of blood feuds, of rapine, of murder, and of disorder. Raiding to them is not merely a hereditary pastime, but owing to the sterile and forbidding character of the country in which they live it is often an economic necessity. Finally, however quiet they may appear to be, there is scarcely any one of these tribes that is not capable of being carried off its legs and swept away by some tornado of passionate emotion or some influence of religious fanaticism which we can neither foresee nor control.

Further, my Lords, these tribes not merely inhabit a country which, as I have already described, is unusually rugged and difficult of approach, but they are in the peculiar and almost paradoxical position of both being inside and outside the frontier of India. Let me explain what I mean. They are outside the frontier of India in this sense. They are outside the administrative border of India—that is to say, those territories over which we exercise full administrative control, and from which we draw revenue. But they are inside the political border of India—that is, the line drawn by Sir Mortimer Durand when sent by the noble Marquess (Lord Lansdowne) to Kabul in 1893 to come to an arrangement with the Ameer of Afghanistan as to the line of division between his dominions and ours. That line, ever since known as the Durand line, was drawn by him, and it constitutes the outer political frontier of the British Empire in that part of Asia. Up to that line all the tribes are within the British Protectorate, although the degree of control which we exercise over them varies much in individual cases, according to the character of the country and the importance of the roads and passes in it, and the degree of order and civilisation prevailing among the tribes. Still, up to the line we have a perfect right to deal as we please with the tribes, and our right is limited only by considerations of policy, prudence, and caution.

The general principles which we laid down in India in 1899, which we sent home to the Government and which were accepted here, were the following: In the first place, we decided to withdraw from the territory lying outside the administrative frontier as many as possible of the Regular troops who, partly owing to the Tirah campaign and partly owing to the military arrangements existing at that time, were cantoned beyond the border. We held, and I think rightly held, that that was work for which our Regular troops were neither recruited nor suited; and so effectively was that policy carried out that whereas when I went to India there were as many as 15,000 Regulars across the frontier, when I left there were little more than 4,000, almost entirely placed in the important positions of Samana and Chitral. Secondly, in place of the Regulars whom we withdrew, we placed in this tribal territory for the military protection and security of the country, forces of tribal Militia, levies and police, recruited from the tribesmen themselves, and commanded and disciplined by young English officers, the very best that we could get for the work. When I left India these tribal forces amounted to 10,000 men. Thirdly, we did our best to improve and perfect our system of roads and railways and communications behind the frontier in order to be able to reinforce any point that might be threatened by rising in the future. Then we proceeded to create out of the districts of the province of the Punjab lying adjacent to the frontier a separate Administration known as the North-West Frontier province, under an officer specially selected for his knowledge of the frontier and of the tribes, and directly responsible to the Government of India. I believe that was a policy not altogether favoured by the noble Earl when in India, but I am sure he will be the first to admit that in its execution it has been a complete success, and that neither his Government nor any other Government, either in India or here, is for the present, at any rate, at all likely to depart from it. Then we continued to the tribes the system of subsidies and allowances which had existed before, endeavouring to fix tribal responsibility to the best of our power. Lastly, and this is the most important point of all, our policy was to interfere as little as possible with the internal organisation and independence of the tribes, and by a policy of steady persistence in conciliation to endeavour to win them over to our side. I think that is a fair summary of the policy that was accepted in 1899.

May I say at once that this policy was undoubtedly open—I have never denied it—to possible objections, and even to positive risks. There was the risk involved to the individuals concerned. Every one of these young British officers to whom I alluded just now, who went out into the far country in the hills to act as officer of a half-trained, half-disciplined body of native Militia, carried his life in his hands. He was perfectly willing to do it. He esteemed it an honour for the sake of his country to do it. But he ran that risk, and in a number of cases—a regrettable number of cases—he fell a victim to the knife or the bullet of the fanatic on the border. That is no doubt a heavy price to pay, but it is the price we have to pay inside the border as well as outside it, and it is a risk which nobody who has served on the border of India is not at any time willing to incur. The policy undoubtedly involved a considerable element of confidence in the tribes, because, supposing the tribesmen refused to join the Militia, or that the best and most law-abiding among them having joined the Militia and taken our pay, the remainder of the tribes continued to pursue their policy of lawless depredation upon British subjects on the frontier, it is obvious that from that moment the scheme would be imperilled, and if it broke down there would be no alternative but to resort as before to force and to compel the people to a reluctant submission. All these arguments were urged against the policy at the time. They were carefully considered by the Government, but they did not deter us from adopting it. But after all, is not the main test of any frontier policy in India the degree of peace and tranquillity that it gives to the areas concerned? On this point it is quite easy to reassure your Lordships, and by that test let our frontier policy be judged. Whereas, in the fifty years that elapsed between the annexation of the Punjab and the frontier campaign of 1897, to which I have referred, there were no fewer than forty expeditions across the border, during the ten years that have elapsed since that date, with the single exception of the punitive counter raids which we undertook in order to finish up the blockade of the Waziri tribes, there has been no warfare of any description on the frontier. The Militia, to the institution of which I have referred, have been, on the whole, successful—so successful, at any rate, that the Commander-in-Chief in India has twice recommended an increase in their numbers, and in the range of their responsibilities, and most important of all, I think we have really convinced the majority of the tribes that the British Government has every desire to respect their religion, their country and their independence.

In spite of these considerations, it is fair to admit that there has always existed, and I daresay there does now exist, a party in India, backed by the highest military authority—although I believe it to be a party dwindling in numbers and in importance—which does not agree with the views I have put before your Lordships this afternoon. They hold that that policy is an unwise one, that it is certain sooner or later to break down, and, in fact, that it ought to be abandoned now. Their argument, in so far as I can do justice to it, is as follows: They say that it is unwise and undesirable to have these indeterminate relations with the tribes, that so long as you have a frontier which is the outer line of British influence you ought to hold with full power and full assertion of administrative and executive authority up to that line; that in the event of our ever having to make a military advance into Afghanistan it would be a terrible danger to have this great force of half-disciplined, half-armed and possibly hostile men upon our flank; that the real policy should be to get round these tribes to surround them, so to speak, with a military cordon, and that only in that way can we solve the frontier question and obtain permanent tranquillity on the border. This scheme of policy, which I have ventured to describe to your Lordships, is perfectly intelligible. It is logical in structure, it is forcible and indeed most drastic in its methods, and the results which it might obtain, if they were obtained, are, indeed, such as it would be worth paying a considerable price for.

But, my Lords, this scheme, like many schemes very symmetrical in character, drawn up in official bureaux, suffers from the incurable defect that it is wholly impracticable. It is impracticable for this reason. Before it could obtain the results I have described, you would have your frontiers in India ablaze from one end to the other. You would have not merely one Tirah campaign, but a succession of Tirah campaigns. It would be the experience of Russia in the Caucasus, which I think lasted for twenty or twenty-five years, over again in India. At the time when there is or has been a certain amount of unrest in India—an unrest which I believe to be happily subsiding—it would be surely a most unfortunate and gratuitously unwise thing to add to our responsibilities the burden of possible complications and fighting upon the frontier. You could not carry through that plan without adding very largely to the Indian Army; and if you not merely increase the Indian Army, but throw in the cost of the campaigns that would be entailed, you would impose not only a considerable but an almost intolerable burden on Indian finances. Once started upon this plan you would not be able to stop at any definite point; you would have to go on until you had subjugated the entire frontier, from north to south. And, above all, there would be the risk, the not inappreciable risk, of complications and possibly of collision with the Ameer of Afghanistan. Therefore it seems to me to be imperative that we should dismiss the ambitious but too perilous programme which I have described, and restrict ourselves to the steady pursuance of the more modest policy which I have endeavoured to place before your Lordships. I think the day may one day come when we shall be driven out of this attitude by the tribes themselves, but if that be so, let us not be impelled by any act of our own or before the compulsion becomes irresistible. I do look forward to a distant future, when the whole of these frontier tribesmen will fall completely under British control. It seems almost impossible to contemplate that for an indefinite period, viewing modern standards of order and civilisation, these wild and lawless men can be allowed from birth to the grave to pursue upon the British frontier their career of rapine and crime. Should the day ever come when they are definitely incorporated within our system there would, I think, be one invaluable result, viz., they would constitute the most splendid recruits for the Indian Army of the future. But that day is not yet. We must not even look for it in the near future. For the present we must, I think, confine our view to a narrower horizon and to less substantial results. We certainly ought not to exhibit any weakness or fear on the frontier. We must strike hard and strike rapidly when the provocation occurs, as I understand His Majesty's Government are doing in the present case. But let us continue as long as we possibly can to pursue our policy of respect for the independence and sentiment of the tribes.

I think it may fairly be said that the omens in favour of such a policy are most encouraging. In the first place, there is the ten years peace to which I have referred. Now, my Lords, ten years peace on the Indian frontier constitutes a very solid and very valuable asset. As I have already pointed out, it is an experience that we have not been able to point to for fifty years. Every year gained for peace is a year taken away from the forces of violence and disorder. Every such year means a saving of so many lakhs of rupees and so many valuable lives. Every year so gained is a step forward towards an ultimate solution of this question, which will be a pacific and not a violent solution, because the more experience the tribesmen have of peace and its advantages, and more particularly its economic advantages, the more will they turn away and be averse from the pursuit of war.

Finally, there is one illustration which I should like to mention of the concrete results of the policy which I have described. There is a part of the frontier which the noble Earl will remember, known as the Swat Valley. It was a name of very sinister omen in his day, because the people of the Swat Valley were one of the most formidable and dangerous of our antagonists in those campaigns, and because from the Swat Valley starts that road which we made through Dir to Chitral, which was the source of so many bitter contentions and such gloomy prophecies ten or twelve years ago. Now, if I might make a personal reference I would say this: There is no more unwise or unedifying experience than to look up one's old speeches; nobody else ever does it for you, and the less you do it yourself the better. But somebody the other day called my attention to a speech which I made as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons exactly ten years ago on the frontier campaign, just before I went to India. On looking up that speech, which I had completely forgotten, I found that I committed myself to a prophecy, indeed I said that I would stake all I possessed, that within ten years of that date there would be peace and tranquillity upon the Chitral road. Everybody, I am afraid, regarded that as a wild and fantastic exhibition of extravagance on the part of an ambitious and ill-tutored mind. But standing here to-day, almost exactly to a day ten years later, I am able to tell your Lordships that that prophecy has been strictly fulfilled. Not only is the road running from Swat to Chitral safe, but the Swat Valley itself, which was a storm point on the frontier in 1897, is now almost the most peaceful section of the border. What is my point? Why has this change been produced? It has been produced, I say, for three reasons and three alone. In the first place we did not annex the country of the tribesmen; secondly, we have ever since given them well-paid occupation as levies, and in other capacities in connection with the road; and, thirdly, in the ten years of peace that have intervened the country has grown fat and prosperous, and the tribesmen themselves have turned to trade and irrigation, and their present position is in itself the strongest incentive to them to turn away from their previous career of predatory crime. I regard that as a very encouraging illustration of the success that is capable of attending the policy I have described. What we have done there I think we may do—at any rate we ought to attempt to do—elsewhere. Anyhow, I hope we shall not be hurried, and I am convinced His Majesty's Government are not at all likely to be hurried, out of a policy of patience and conciliation by any incidents, however mortifying or exasperating they may be. It is because I am hopeful—indeed I am confident—that the views I have ventured to express will be endorsed by His Majesty's Government, and that while pushing this present expedition to its legitimate conclusion, and extracting from it the maximum profit they can, they will yet continue the steady development of the policy that I have described, that I have ventured to call your Lordships' attention to this question by the notice which I put upon the Paper this afternoon.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of ELGIN): My Lords, in reference to the opening criticisms of the noble Lord respecting the representation of India in this House, I would remind your Lordships that, although we have not got the Secretary for India or the Under-Secretary here, we have as a general rule found a representative of the India Office in my noble friend the Lord Steward, whose ability, I am sure, is recognised by the House. Moreover, in addition to myself, we have with us in the Leader of the House, my noble friend Lord Ripon, another ex-Viceroy of India who is pre-eminently qualified to deal with Indian questions. It is quite true, as the noble Lord said, that Mr. Hobhouse, the Under-Secretary for India, is absent in India. But it must be remembered that Mr. Hobhouse undertook the chairmanship of the Commission because the chairman originally chosen failed at the last moment, and therefore, it was not at first intended to send the Under-Secretary on that mission.

With regard to the Questions which the noble Lord has put on the Paper, I have to say at once that His Majesty's Government do not intend to make any departure from the principles of the frontier policy which were laid down by the Secretary of State ten years ago. The purport of those declarations was that there should be no extension of our responsibilities in tribal country, and no interference whatever with the tribes if it could possibly be avoided. Those principles were re-affirmed in 1904 by the then Secretary of State, and have been pursued by successive Governments since that time. For reasons which it would be inimical to public policy to mention, the general arguments against any reversal of this policy in the present case, though they are very strong, cannot very well be stated in detail.

The object of the expedition against the Zakka Khel is limited to the punishment which they so justly deserve for the long series of outrages against the lives and property of those who dwell within their sphere of operations. Therefore the Government of India have been instructed to take no steps leading in any way to the permanent occupation of that country, and orders in that sense have been issued to the general in command of the expedition. The noble Lord is so great an authority on all matters relating to the frontier of India that even I, though one of his predecessors in the Viceroyalty of India, have some hesitations in differing from him; and indeed I have no intention of doing so in this particular instance. It has always been my contention that the government of India is too great a thing to allow of the introduction of purely personal or individual interests, and that, on the contrary, it must be considered as a continuing administration. This is particularly the case in regard to the frontier policy. In that case we all felt that we were under the disadvantage of having to deal with the excessively vagrant dispositions in the tribes along that frontier, and I must confess that I have some hesitation in accepting the principle that any system could be depended upon in all circumstances to obviate difficulties or to prevent disasters.

I venture to think that the experience of the noble Lord and myself differs chiefly, if not entirely, in this—that I met most of the storm. But I should like to remind him, and I am sure he will admit it, that if he ever studied the papers which were recorded in the time preceding his assumption of the government of India he found that I also advocated reforms, and reforms on lines not so very different from those which he afterwards pursued. I remember, after the wars of 1897, dealing with questions regarding the posts which ought to be occupied by the Regular military forces, regarding the Militia and the levies. He was in a more fortunate position, and he was able, therefore, to make changes, some of which he has described to your Lordships this evening. So far as I know, that scheme holds the field. At the same time, I think it would not be disputed that there have been difficulties under that scheme, if not as great, at any rate as well as under other schemes. In fact, the noble Lord has referred to some, he has referred to the painful incidents of the murders that occurred in connection with the levies, and therefore I do not think it is possible to speak too positive y with regard to the endurance of the system as a whole. I do not suppose the noble Lord would wish me to pledge the Government to anything of that nature. All that I can say, therefore, is that, so far, there are no proposals before the Secretary of State for any modification of the scheme which the noble Lord proposed.

It would be inopportune, probably, to go into arguments, as I might perhaps have done if I desired to follow in detail some of the references of the noble Lord, before we have specific questions before the Government which are under consideration to be dealt with. But I should like to say just this further. If in the question of system changes from time to time may become inevitable to meet the varying circumstances or the varying attitudes of the tribes with whom we have to deal, surely that makes it all the more desirable to maintain the principles upon which the policy of the Government has been based, and especially those principles which have stood the test of time. In these discussions the despatch which has been referred to is that of 1898, and it has been stated that that has been reaffirmed by more than one Secretary of State. I think I may say that no other principles than those which were stated in that despatch were the guiding directions of the Government over which I had the honour to preside; and I should almost be inclined to venture the proposition that the noble Marquess opposite, who preceded me, would say very much the same thing. If so, we have a period of years even longer than that to which the noble Lord has referred, as a justification for the maintenance of the policy in which, as I understand it, both he and I are agreed.

The noble Lord has said that he dislikes reading his old speeches, and so do I, and much more do I dislike quoting them, but there are two incidents that I would refer to for a moment in order to make good what I have just been saying. It so happened that it was at the very beginning of the military proceedings on the frontier that I met a large assemblage of the chiefs of the Punjab at Lahore, in 1894. Indeed, one of the pieces of business which made that an exceptionally heavy week was the necessity of settling with Sir William Lockhart the conditions under which he was to undertake his expedition to Waziristan. In addressing the chiefs I ventured to say to them that the policy of the Government was to leave to the tribes the entire occupation of their country, the fullest measure of autonomy, and the most complete liberty to follow their tribal customs. It happened in 1898 that the last visit I paid in the Punjab was to the State of Patiala, in order that I might invest the Chief of that country with the decoration of the Star of India in recognition of his services in the frontier expeditions. On that occasion I referred to the profession which I have just quoted, and I added that—

> "Whatever else may have happened, to this declaration I claim that I have adhered, so that no tribe or section of a tribe has since then been compelled against its will to surrender any territory or any right of self-government which it desires to retain."

I have troubled your Lordships with these extracts to show that both in profession, and, I think, in execution, the Government of India in my time did act upon the principles which were stated in the despatch of Lord George Hamilton. I well remember, of course, that despatch, and I also well remember the support which we received in the House of Commons from the noble Lord who has just spoken. I think what I have now said shows that I was within the mark when, in the Legislative Council of the Viceroy in Calcutta, on the discussion of that despatch, I maintained that we had, as a matter of fact, carried out our obligations on the frontier with the minimum of interference with the internal affairs of the tribes, and the avoidance, so far as was possible, of direct administration where it was not desirable.

The noble Lord referred to the Swat Valley and the Chitral road, and I welcome very much from him the statement that that has been in effect so successful in promoting the well-being of the peoples through whose country the road passes. But I should like to say on my own account that it always was a road on which we exercised no direct administration after it passed beyond the limits of the garrison of Malakand. That, therefore, I think, is an illustration that goes a good long way to show that even without operations for containing territories we may do a good deal, by helping the promotion of trade and communications, to bring the people to a state of mind and body in which they will not be so liable to make sudden attacks on our posts and garrisons.

One other thing I should like to say in reply to the noble Lord. He said that the last ten years has been a remarkable period in the recent history of India because it would be almost impossible to find a similar period of peace. I can only say that when we were forced—because it was against our will—into these operations on the frontier, the one consolation to us was that the expectation was held out that a period of peace must almost inevitably follow, or could be reasonably expected at any rate. And, curiously enough, my recollection is that the period which was held out as a reasonable expectation was a period of ten years. I do not know that I can give any further assurance to the noble Lord than I have given, but I hope what I have said will not be wholly unsatisfactory to him.

House adjourned at a Quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 26th February, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Manchester Corporation Bill (by Order). Read a second time, and committed.

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill. "To extend the boundaries of the burgh of Motherwell; to authorise the Provost, Magistrates, and Councillors of the said burgh to construct and maintain sewers and sewage purification works; to acquire lands for sewage purification; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

Wishaw Burgh Electricity, etc., Bill. "To confer further powers on the Provost Magistrates and Councillors of the burgh of Wishaw in connection with their electricity undertaking; to authorise the laying of mains and pipes in connection with the supply of gas beyond the burgh; and to make provision with respect to the width of streets; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

PETITIONS.

CONGO FREE STATE.

Petition from Hull, for protection of the Native Races; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSED PREMISES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN).

Petitions for legislation: From Forest Gate; Gorleston; Pocklington; and West Ham and Strafford; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Bridport; Earlsfield; Holbeck; Hull; Norwich; Southsea; and Worksop; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Wandsworth and Putney; and Wycliffe; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ALIENS (NATURALISATION).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 11th February; *Mr. Herbert Samuel*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 72.]

FRANCE (No. 1, 1908).

Copy presented, of Report by the hon. Reginald Lister, His Majesty's Minister at Paris, upon the French Colonies [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Minute of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, dated 25th February, 1908, providing for the distribution of the General Aid Grant [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL DEBT ANNUITIES.

Account presented, of the Gross Amount of all Bank Annuities and any Annuities for terms of years transferred and of all sums of Money paid to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, and the Gross Amount of Annuities for Lives and for terms of years, etc., granted within the year ended 5th January, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 73.]

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Irish Land Commission (Account). Copy of Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General upon the Account of the Irish Land Commission for the year ended 31st March, 1907 [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 74.]

DRUNKENNESS (IRELAND).

Return ordered, "Giving the number of Arrests for Drunkenness within the Metropolitan Police District of Dublin and the Cities of Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford, from the hour of 9 p.m. to 12 midnight on Saturdays, and from 12 midnight to 8 a.m. on Sundays, and from 8 a.m. on Sunday till 2 p.m., and from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight, from 12 midnight to 8 a.m. on Monday, between the 1st day of January and the 31st day of December, both days inclusive for the years 1906 and 1907 respectively and similar Returns for the rest of Ireland from the 1st day of January to the 31st December, for the years 1906 to 1907 respectively; the arrests being given from 9 p.m. on Saturdays to 9 a.m. on Sundays, and from 9 a.m. on Sundays till 7 a.m. on Mondays."—(*Mr. Sloan.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Life and Cost of Maintenance of Battleships.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what is the estimated life of a first-class battleship of the most modern type; and on this basis what is the annual cost of maintaining such a battleship in full commission, allowing for interest and depreciation of capital, for wages of officers and crew, and a proportionate charge for pensions and training, for stores, repairs and renewals, and every other necessary item.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) It is not the custom in this country to condemn ships solely on the ground of age, but, in preference to fixing an arbitrary age limit, regard is had to the condition and general suitability for service of each ship.

Sale of the Phibbs and M'Alpine Robertson Estates, County Mayo.

Dr. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he could give any reason why the negotiations for the sale of the Phibbs and M'Alpin Robertson estates, situate at Windsor, near Castlebar, county Mayo, which were begun in 1905, have fallen through; and if there is any immediate prospect of the untenanted land on said estates being utilised for the relief of the congestion that at present exists amongst the said tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I am informed that in 1906 the Congested Districts Board had some correspondence with the owners of the estates in question, but the estates were not definitely offered for sale to the Board and the negotiations fell through. The Board have recently learnt that the owners of both properties are now prepared to offer them for sale to the Board, and particulars are awaited. The Board, however, are not in a position to say that there is an immediate prospect of their acquiring these estates, as, owing to the lack of funds for improvement purposes, they have had to postpone negotiations for purchase in such cases for the present.

Accident Compensation Scheme in Dockyards—Time for Consideration.

Mr. W. T. Wilson (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state how it was that the employees in the Construction Department in the Royal Dockyard at Portsmouth were only allowed from 16th January to 9 o'clock a.m. 17th January, to consider a revised compensation for accidents scheme submitted to them, although the Treasury recommended that a week should be allowed for its consideration.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) Instructions were given for the time to be extended to 27th January, and the men concerned were informed accordingly.

Specific Gravity of Beer.

Mr. BARNARD (Kidderminster): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will state the average specific gravity of a bulk barrel of beer in the year immediately preceding the imposition of the war tax of 1s., and the specific gravity in the last-known financial year for England and Wales.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The average specific gravity of a bulk barrel of beer in England and Wales was 1,054·50 in the year ended 31st March 1900, and 1,052·58 in the year ended 31st March, 1907.

The Imperial Exchequer and Cost of Scottish Valuation.

Mr. HAROLD COX: To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received any request from the Corporation of Glasgow that he will receive a deputation to urge the desirability of placing upon the Imperial Exchequer the whole or part of the cost of the new method of valuation for Scottish counties and boroughs proposed in the Land Values (Scotland) Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) A verbal request on Monday last for an immediate interview reached the Scottish Office while I was attending a meeting of the Cabinet on that day, and which I was unable to arrange for at such short notice.

Scottish Councils and the Government's Scottish Land Legislation.

Mr. HAROLD COX: To ask the Secretary for Scotland how many county councils and borough councils there are in Scotland, and how many of them have addressed petitions to him or to other Members of His Majesty's Government in favour of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill now before the House, or of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill of last session; and which are the boroughs or county councils which have addressed such petitions.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) There are thirty-three county councils and 205 town councils in Scotland. As regards petitions to Members of the Government, which is not a common practice so far as I am aware, I can only speak for myself. I have received no petitions, but copies of Resolutions, in favour of these Bills have reached me from the town councils of Glasgow, Dundee, Fraserburgh, and Newport.

Irish Land Stock—Losses on Flotation.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can now inform the House of the details of the scheme of the Treasury for avoiding the loss on flotation of Irish Land Stock.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am not yet in a position to make a statement on the subject, but I hope to be able to do so at an early date.

Income-Tax—Claims for Reduced Rate.

Mr. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that certain persons inadvertently failed to make their claims for abatement of income-tax on earned incomes by the date fixed; and whether, in view of the fact that this is the first occasion on which a limit of time for such purpose was fixed, he will allow additional days of grace to such persons this financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I may perhaps be permitted to refer my hon. friend to the reply which I gave to a Question by the hon. Member for East Tipperary, printed with the Votes for 6th February, in which the position is fully dealt with. In view of the explicit terms of the Act, and also on account of administrative considerations, I am afraid it is impossible to extend the concessions which have already been made.

Inspection of Irish Schools.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can state if the Commissioners of National Education, Ireland, have issued any revised instructions to inspectors with regard to the inspection of schools, and especially as to individual examination; and, if so, have copies been forwarded to managers and teachers.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that revised instructions to inspectors in regard to the inspection of schools and the individual examination of pupils were issued in 1902. Copies of these instructions were supplied to the managers and teachers of national schools. Another circular relating to the inspection of schools was similarly issued in 1903 to inspectors and managers.

Captain CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, how many schools in Circuit 8B have earned the marks excellent, very good, good, fair, and middling, respectively, for the years ending 30th June 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they see grave objections to furnishing a Return of the particulars asked for in the Question.

Religious Persuasion of Royal Irish Constabulary.

Captain CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will state the percentage of members of the Church of Ireland in the police force stationed in Queen's County who are on the promoted list.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Inspector General informs me that it would be contrary to practice, and would in his opinion be injurious to the interests of the Royal Irish Constabulary, to give information as to the religious persuasion of members of the force whose names are on the promotion list. The question of religion is never taken into account in dealing with promotions.

American Import Duties on Samples and Works of Art.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether the Agreement concluded between the British and United States Governments, for a reciprocal reduction of the import duties on commercial samples and works of art, has yet come into force; and, if so, upon what date the reduced scale of duties came into operation.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Grey.*) The Agreement does not provide for the reduction of duties on commercial samples or for their free admission, but only facilitates their clearance on importation from the United States into the United Kingdom. The Agreement is published in the Treaty Series (No. 44). It is now in force. The proclamation of the President of the United States is dated 5th December last.

Elementary Education Loan Charges.

MR. A. G. C. HARVEY (Rochdale): To ask the President of the Board of Education, if he will state the amounts of the payments which will be made in respect of loan charges, principal and interest, for elementary education by education authorities in England and Wales for each year from 1908 to 1917, inclusive, having regard to such loans as are already contracted.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I regret that the Board of Education possess no statistics on this subject.

Admiralty Steam Coal Contracts.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, what is the arranged price per ton f.o.b. for the steam coal contracts so far made for the new financial year; and what was the average price for 1907–8.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) It is not desirable in the interests of the public service to divulge these prices.

North Devon Coast Guard Service.

MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether he is aware of the dangerous nature of the North Devon coast, and that an efficient Coastguard service is absolutely essential for the protection of life; and whether the Admiralty has any intention of reducing the number of men employed as Coastguards on such coast.

(*Answered by Mr. Edmund Robertson.*) The nature of the North Devon coast is well known, and will receive every consideration should any alteration in the present Coastguard arrangements be contemplated.

Local Authorities and Loans under Licensing Act, 1904.

MR. BARNARD: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether any local authorities have borrowed money under Section 6 (*b*) of The Licensing Act, 1904; and, if so, which, and for what period.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The following list shows the compensation authorities who have obtained my sanction to loans on the security of the compensation funds under the Licensing Act, 1904, the amount of the loans, the date of sanction, and the period of repayment.

Authority.	Amount of loan.	Date of sanction.	Period of repayment.
	£		
Counties:			
Hertfordshire - -	1,300	28 | 2 | 06	2 years
Montgomery - -	100	7 | 12 | 06	1 year
Gloucestershire - -	5,000	14 | 2 | 07	,,
Norfolk - - -	4,000	25 | 4 | 07	,,
Gloucestershire - -	7,500	4 | 11 | 37	,,
Essex - - - -	5,000	13 | 11 | 07	,,
County boroughs:			
Halifax - - -	6,000	11 | 11 | 05	2½ years
Bolton - - -	500	2 | 12 | 05	1 year
Devonport - - -	350	1 | 5 | 06	,,
Swansea - - -	2,300	29 | 12 | 06	,,
Birmingham - -	18,000	28 | 1 | 07	,,
Bolton - - -	1,150	28 | 1 | 07	,,
Worcester - - -	3,100	7 | 2 | 07	,,
Warrington - -	3,000	7 | 5 | 07	1½ years
Portsmouth - -	2,500	24 | 5 | 07	6 months
Leicester - - -	10,500	13 | 6 | 07	1½ years
Worcester - - -	1,600	5 | 9 | 07	,,
London (City) - -	6,000	4 | 11 | 07	1 year
Leeds - - -	12,500	21 | 1 | 08	,,
Portsmouth - -	3,800	23 | 1 | 08	,,
Peterborough (Liberty)	350	29 | 1 | 08	,,

Wimbledon Tithe Rent Redemption.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that in the case of a recent apportionment scheme for the redemption of tithe rent-charge in the borough of Wimbledon the schedule of assessment and plan are alleged to have been deposited for inspection on licensed premises most inconveniently situated for those concerned; and, seeing that no opportunity was afforded for any objection as notices were not sent to the individual landowners, as provided in Paragraph 5 of the Memorandum of the Board, dated 25th December, 1906, will he say what action he proposes to take.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) We are aware that the place of deposit of the schedule of assessment and plan to which the hon. Member refers was an hotel, but we have received no complaints that it is inconveniently situated for those concerned. Notice of the proceedings was duly given as required by the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, and no objections have been lodged with us. Our memorandum of the 22nd December 1906, to which reference is made, refers to compulsory redemption, and not to redemptions of the class in question. No issue of notices is necessary in the latter case.

Licensing Sessions—Justices who are Railway Shareholders.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if, to prevent the technical disqualification of justices at licensing sessions by reason merely of their being railway shareholders, he will consider the advisability of extending to Ireland Section 12 of the Licensing Act of 1902.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The matter is not one which could be properly dealt with by the Licensing Bill of the present Session, the operation of which will be confined to England and Wales; but I have no doubt that my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland will give the suggestion due consideration if and when an opportunity arises for reform of the licensing law with respect to Ireland.

Waggons for the Territorial Army.

MR. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he has now come to any decision as to the number of waggons to be allotted, per battery of 15-pounder guns, for the use of the Territorial Army.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The matter is still under consideration.

Army Pension of J. O'Connor, of Gorton.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the claim of J. O'Connor, of 78, Norton Street, Gorton, late Sergeant-major, who served in the Crimea and in different regiments, for an increase in his military pension can be further inquired into, and the cause for so far withholding a regulation increase of pension formulated for him to deal with; and, if not, whether the reasons for refusing inquiry or an increase will be now stated.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This man, who holds a pension of 2s. 3d. a day for his twenty-one years' service in the Regular forces, claimed an increase of pension for his subsequent seven years' service on the permanent staff of the Militia. As he was discharged with only a "fair" character, in consequence of his services being no longer required, he is ineligible for any increase of pension. He has repeatedly been informed to this effect.

Territorial Army—Quartermasters.

MR. WILKIE (Dundee): To ask the Secretary of State for War, if the new Territorial regiments, which are taking the place of the Volunteer force, are to have experienced quartermasters attached to them, having in view the financial saving and efficiency achieved by those battalions who appointed such officers in the Volunteer force; and, if so, whether funds will be placed at the disposal of the commanding officer or associations to provide salaries for such officers.

(*Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A quartermaster is borne on the infantry establishment, who is a member of the Territorial Force. He will receive pay as a quartermaster of the Regular Army during training in camp. It is hoped that many of the duties hitherto performed by Volunteer quartermasters will now be performed by the Associations, since one of the objects of the scheme is to relieve units of financial responsibility. No special grant has been made for a salary. If any payment for duty outside the period of annual training in camp is necessary it will be met from the association grants.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Mechanician Experiments.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty when it is proposed to report to this House the result of the mechanician experiment and its total cost to date, so that Members may have an opportunity of discussing the same.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): This system is still in course of development, and the reports received on the mechanicians who have been drafted to sea have been satisfactory. It is not possible to separate the cost of training from other Naval services with which it is intimately connected.

Mechanicians in the Navy.

MR. BARNES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many duly qualified mechanicians are now included in the complements of His Majesty's ships; are they additions to the ordinary crew; and, if not, what ratings have they displaced, and in what proportion.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The Answer to the first Question is eighty. The Answer to the second Question is in the negative. As regards the third Question, two mechanicians replace one engine room artificer and one stoker.

Navy Estimates.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the fact of the Navy Estimates appearing as signed by the Board on 29th January precludes all possibility of alterations or adjustments being made subsequent to that date.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The date of the Estimates is determined by the date on which they are ordered to be printed by the House; it has no bearing on their final contents.

Native Affairs Commission.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of Natal has yet taken any steps towards carrying into effect the recommendations contained in the Report of the (Campbell) Native Affairs Commission.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. CHURCHILL, Manchester, N.W.): I am afraid that I am not at present in a position to add anything to my reply to a similar Question on 3rd February.

MR. FLYNN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this Commission reported that these people it was admitted by all competent judges were wonderfully easy to govern if only they are dealt with in the right way.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have read the Report.

MR. FLYNN: Is the evidence taken at the disposal of Members of this House?

MR. CHURCHILL: I have arranged for two copies to be placed in the Tea-room.

Uni-Cameral Legislatures.

MR. WALKER (Leicestershire, Melton): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what, if any, safeguards have been imposed in the Canadian provinces having uni-cameral legislatures against hasty or oppressive legislative action by the single chamber.

MR. CHURCHILL: No safeguards other than the good sense of elected representatives are provided, as far as the Secretary of State is aware.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Is there not a safeguard imposed by the British North America Act which prevents any Bill becoming law unless it receives the assent of the Dominion Legislature?

MR. CHURCHILL: That is not the point raised in the Question, which asks as to the safeguards imposed on the Canadian provinces. The question of safeguards under other circumstances is a different question altogether.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Does not the British North America Act run in the provinces of the Dominion?

MR. CHURCHILL: The scope of that Act though no doubt very interesting is quite a different question, which I am not prepared to answer offhand.

Argentina and the Falkland Archipelago.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he has any official information showing that the Government of the Argentine Republic has intimated a claim to jurisdiction in the Falkland Archipelago; and whether he is in a position to make any statement regarding this.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Sir EDWARD GREY): If the hon. Member will let my right hon. friend know to what he refers in particular, my right hon. friend will endeavour to give what information he has.

Macedonian Reform.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the nature of the concessions promised the Porte by Baron Von Marschall, the German Ambassador, in regard to the matter of judicial reforms in Macedonia; whether the chances of these reforms have been damaged, and to what extent, by the settlement arrived at between the Porte and the Austro-Hungarian Government on the matter of the Novi Bazar Railway; and whether he can state what action the Powers, apart from Germany and Austro-Hungary, intend to take in obtaining judicial reform in Macedonia.

MR. RUNCIMAN: My right hon. friend must refer the hon. Member to the statement which he made yesterday; he has nothing to add to it.

Drunkenness in London.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of charges of drunkenness which came before the Metropolitan Police Courts during the year 1907 in respect of arrests made on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, respectively; or whether, in the alternative, he will grant a Return giving such information.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland): The only available figures of the kind desired by the hon. Member are those which were given by me to the House on the 6th of March last in the debate upon a Motion that licensed premises should be closed on Sundays. The figures show that during the three months ended 31st January, 1907, in the Metropolitan Police District were:—For Saturday, 3,966; Sunday, 946; Monday, 2,032. It would involve great labour and expenditure of time to compile similar figures for a period of twelve months; and I do not think the larger figures, if obtained, would afford ground for any inference which cannot be drawn from the figures already given.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: Will the hon. Gentleman endeavour before it is too late to induce the Government to include in their forthcoming Licensing Bill a provision for Saturday and Monday closing of public-houses?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Whisky Commission.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the place of residence, country of birth, professional experience, and qualifications of the individual members of the Whisky Commission; whether any representations were made to the Government by the Scottish whisky blenders and distillers, or any of their representatives, with reference to the constitution, membership, or terms of reference of the Commission; whether he will request the Commissioners to issue an *ad interim* Report as soon as possible on the question of what constitutes whisky; whether the interests affected may be represented by counsel before the Commission; whether the Commission will sit in Ireland; and whether the evidence will be taken on oath.

I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to expressions of dissatisfaction at the constitution of the Whisky Commission, and at the ignoring of Irish interests in the appointment of the Commissioners; whether he is aware that, in consequence of what the Irish distillers describe as the unfair tactics of the Scottish blenders and distillers in connection with the question of what is whisky, the Irish distillery trade has already suffered heavily, three Irish distillers having failed and three others being at present in the hands of the receiver in bankruptcy; and whether, in view of the injustice to an important Irish industry, he will amend the constitution of the Commission at the earliest possible moment by the appointment of additional members possessing the full confidence of the Irish interests involved.

I beg further to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the reason why Sir Henry Robinson was consulted with reference to the appointment of a representative of Ireland on the Whisky Commission; what special qualification Sir Henry Robinson possesses to entitle him to recommend any such representative; whether Professor Adeney, the member of the Commission appointed to represent Ireland, is not an Irishman, was connected with South Kensington and Birmingham University, has no knowledge whatever of the Irish distillery trade or of the position of the Irish barley growers, whose interests are most deeply affected by the Commission, and is not known in Ireland outside his own laboratory; whether the origin of the Commission was the question as to what was whisky; whether he is aware that the issue of the question is of vital importance to Irish distillers and barley growers; that the Scottish blenders and distillers expended over £10,000 in connection with the trial of the issue in the Law Courts; and that a decision in favour of the Scottish whisky blenders and distillers will kill the Irish whisky trade in Great Britain; and whether, seeing that the Commission is composed of a majority of Scotsmen or of men favourable to the Scottish interests involved in the case, and in view of all the circumstances, he will take steps to have the interests of Ireland adequately represented by the appointment of an equal number of Irishmen to that of the Scotsmen now serving on the Commission, or at least by the appointment of one Irish representative in whom Irish distillers and barley growers can have confidence.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I will answer together the three Questions which stand in the name of the hon. Member and relate to the Royal Commission on Whisky. The Commission consists of Lord James of Hereford, of whose legal knowledge and experience in dealing with conflicting trade interests it is unnecessary that I should say anything; of two officials representing the Board of Inland Revenue and the Local Government Board; of two gentlemen nominated by the Secretary for Scotland and the Irish Local Government Board respectively; and of three other members who are experienced men possessing scientific or professional attainments which should enable them to form a sound judgment on the various scientific matters referred to them. I carefully considered the question whether representatives of the trade interests involved should be placed on the Commission, and I came to the conclusion that the better course was to refer the whole question to impartial men, none of whom were in any way committed to trade views or nominated by the trade, but who would take evidence as to the trade interests concerned, and consider not only these interests, but also those of the consumer and of the public health in relation to the matter. I cannot in answer to a Question go into details respecting the members of the Commission, but I may say that I am not aware that a majority of them are Scotsmen or men favourable to the Scottish interests involved, or that representations were made by the Scottish whisky blenders and distillers with reference to the points mentioned in the first Question. I have not received expressions of dissatisfaction at the constitution of the Commission. I fully realise the importance to Ireland of the questions involved, but I do not think there is any ground for considering that Ireland has been unfairly treated in the matter. As I have already stated, the Irish Local Government Board were asked to nominate a member, and Sir Henry Robinson, acting on behalf of that Board, nominated Professor Adeney, who, I understand, has been connected with Ireland for more than thirty years. I see no sufficient reasons for advising any alteration in the constitution of the Commission. They are holding their first meeting to-day, and I understand that whisky will be the first question considered by them. It will rest with them to settle their own procedure and to determine where they will sit, and whether or not they will hear counsel. They will have no power to take evidence on oath. I have no doubt they will ascertain the facts as speedily as practicable, and consider fairly all the interests involved.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): May I ask what precedent there is for asking the Local Government Board in Ireland to nominate a member of a Commission of this kind? I understand the right hon. Gentleman asked the Secretary for Scotland to nominate a Scottish member, but why was not the Irish Secretary asked to recommend an Irish member, instead of the Local Government Board?

MR. JOHN BURNS: The reason is that it was felt by everybody that the condition of the whisky trade in England, Ireland and Scotland affected not only public health, but morals as well, and that it was in the interests of health and morals as well as the scientific aspect that the Local Government Boards of the three countries should be consulted. I may add that in an article in the *Freeman's Journal* two columns long yesterday a pot-still distiller said a question of the public health had been ignored to the detriment of the Irish pot-still trade. That is why the Irish Local Government Board was consulted.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Then am I to understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that he did not ask the Irish Government to make the nomination, because it was a subject which concerned morals?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I consulted the Local Government Board both in Ireland and in Scotland, because it was a question affecting the public health, and without good public health you cannot get good morals.

MR. J. DEVLIN: The right hon. Gentleman states that he consulted the Irish Local Government Board, but is it not a fact that Sir Henry Robinson is only one of the members of that Board, and that the Chief Secretary is President, and why was Sir Henry Robinson allowed to make the nomination?

MR. JOHN BURNS: In the first place, the Chief Secretary for Ireland is President and was consulted, but owing to his regrettable illness and absence the Vice-President sent a reply to the Local Government Board in England. I presume it was done with the sanction of the Chief Secretary.

MR. J. DEVLIN: Did Sir Henry Robinson consult his colleagues on the Local Government Board, or did he make the recommendation on his own initiative?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have no information, but I presume he did so.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): Will the right hon. Gentleman appoint Lord Pirrie on this Commission?

MR. JOHN BURNS: Certainly not.

*MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Is it a fact that after the Commission is appointed the right hon. Gentleman has no control over its procedure or sittings, and that the Commissioners will be entitled to do whatever they think proper and to sit in Ireland or Scotland, or anywhere else?

MR. JOHN BURNS: That is so.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease—Imports of Foreign Fodder Prohibited.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give any further particulars as to the second outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease at Edinburgh; whether any source of infection can be traced between the two infected places; and whether there is any suspicion that foreign forage had been used by the owner on both farms.

*THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The second outbreak occurred in a cowshed about half-mile distant from the one in which the first outbreak was detected and among cows belonging to the same owner as in the previous case. The probability is that the disease was conveyed by mediate contagion between the two infected places. There is no evidence as yet which suggests that foreign forage has been used on the second set of premises. It was used on the premises where the first outbreak occurred and there is no reasonable room for doubt that it was the medium by which infection was introduced.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): I beg to ask to what country or countries the Order prohibiting the importation of foreign hay and straw will apply. What is the evidence and information now before the Board which has satisfied the Department that the disease was imported with foreign hay or straw, and from what country or countries was the fodder imported.

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said it was proposed, subject to revision, to prohibit hay and straw from being landed in this country from all Europe except Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and from certain South American States. The hay in the present case was imported from the Netherlands, where foot-and-mouth disease has been very prevalent during the last autumn and the present winter. The hay was first used for bedding these cows three days before the first symptoms occurred, and within two days afterwards 81 out of 110 cows were found to be affected.

MR. CHAPLIN: Is it not a fact that the Board of Agriculture was warned a considerable time ago of the danger of the importation of foot-and-mouth disease from the Netherlands by the Central Chamber of Agriculture and urged to prohibit the importation of fodder from that country?

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: That may have been so, but I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that only on one occasion in the whole history of these diseases in this country, and never because of previous outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, but only during the cattle plague, which is more serious than foot-and-mouth disease, was hay prohibited from coming from any country and then only for a few months. On this occasion the Government have acted very promptly and much more stringently than any previous Government under like conditions by deciding to prohibit hay and straw from being landed in this country for agricultural purposes from countries where foot-and-mouth disease exists.

MR. CHAPLIN: Am I right, then, in supposing that foot-and-mouth disease has been imported by these means because His Majesty's Government did not take the steps that were urged upon them by the Chamber of Agriculture?

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The right hon. Gentleman must understand nothing of the kind.

In reply to a further question—

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said the Order would come into force when it had been fully considered; it was in draft.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: Will the prohibition apply to every country in which there has been foot-and-mouth disease for the last six months?

*SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Practically that will be so.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): Will a similar Order be issued for Ireland.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Yes, Sir.

Milk-Blended Butter.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the attention of the Department of Agriculture has been directed to the newspaper advertisements of a prominent firm maufacturing milk-blended butter, which advertisements contravene Clause 9, Sub-section 3, and Clause 10 of the Butter and Margarine Act, 1907; and what steps they propose to take for the protection of the public.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: No advertisements in contravention of the law have been brought to our notice, but if the hon. Member would be good enough to supply us with any information in his possession on the subject, inquiry would be made, and proceedings instituted, if necessary.

MR. BARRIE: Is it not the fact that an advertisement has appeared in practically all the leading papers of Great Britain clearly conveying to the public that they are buying a pure butter when they are really buying an article expressly forbidden to be called butter or by any name suggesting that it is connected with the dairy industry?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will send me a copy of the paper.

MR. BARRIE: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Department for Agriculture will reconsider the names already sanctioned to secure that in purchasing milk-blended butter, containing 24 per cent. of water, the public may be sufficiently protected.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board see no necessity for the reconsideration of the names which they have approved for use in connection with milk-blended butter. None of them are suggestive of butter or anything connected with the dairy interest, and it does not appear to the Board that their use is calculated to mislead buyers of the articles to which they refer.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this article is allowed to contain 24 per cent. of moisture, or 8 per cent. more than is permitted in butter on the understanding it shall not be called by any name similar to butter? And does not the sale of "Pearksown" by Pearks & Co. mislead——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is the Question the hon. Member asked the other day.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Is not the object of the legislation an invention of fancy names to deceive the public and make them think they are not buying milk-blended butter?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. BARRIE: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what is the approved wording on the wrappers used in the sale of milk-blended butter describing its character and showing the percentage of water it contains, as required under the Butter and Margarine Act, 1907, Clause 9, Sub-section 1.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The description, which the Board have approved, is as follows—"This is a mixture of butter and milk, and it contains nearly 24 per cent. of water, which is about 8 per cent. (about 1¼ oz. in every pound) in excess of the 16 per cent. (about 2½ oz.) allowed in butter."

Scottish Sheriffs' Substitutes.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord-Advocate if, in future appointments of sheriffs and sheriffs' substitute in Scotland, he will make it a condition that retirement should take place at a certain age.

I beg also to ask the Lord-Advocate if he can say how many sheriffs and sheriffs-substitutes there are in Scotland at present administering justice who are over seventy years of age.

THE LORD-ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The tenure of office of sheriffs and sheriffs substitute is regulated by statute, and any change in the terms of appointment would require legislative sanction. I have myself no power to make the condition mentioned. I have no official knowledge of the ages of sheriffs and sheriffs-substitute.

Mr. WATT: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to bring in legislation on the matter.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW: No, Sir.

Douglas Crofter Commission.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will lay upon the Table the Report of the Douglas Commission with regard to the crofting districts of Scotland.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): No, Sir. The Report to which I understand the hon. Gentleman refers, and for which the Government has, of course, no responsibility, is the result of the labours of some gentlemen who, for their own purposes, visited parts of the crofting districts this autumn. It has been published in the Press.

Mr. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): Who appointed this Douglas Commission, what was the scope of its inquiry, and to whom is the Report addressed?

Mr. SINCLAIR asked for notice.

Returns of Agrarian Crimes.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for South Down, I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the statement that the total number of agrarian crimes recorded as such in 1907 was 372, and that the total number of crimes of cattle-driving in the same period was 381, he will state what proportion of the latter is included in the statistics of agrarian crime; and why these statistics include only a certain number of the reported cases of cattle-driving, while others, forming apparently the majority, are excluded.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): The 372 agrarian crimes recorded in 1907 were all indictable offences. Non-indictable offences are not included in returns of agrarian crime. The 372 cases include fifteen cases of cattle-driving under the head of Unlawful Assembly, in which persons were proceeded against on indictment. In the great majority of cases the drives were carried out by stealth and there was no evidence that three or more persons were engaged in them, or that there were any circumstances of terror such as are necessary to constitute an unlawful assembly. They could not, therefore, be classified as Unlawful Assemblies and placed in the category of indictable crimes. Cases in which compensation has been awarded for malicious injury to the cattle by overdriving, etc., have been treated as indictable, and included in the 372 agrarian cases. These cases appear under the head of Injury to Property.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG: Then are we to understand that a cattle-drive, no matter how serious, is not included in the statistics of crime unless some person is arrested or punished in connection with it?

Mr. CHERRY: I do not think that follows. If there is an assembly of persons large enough to constitute an unlawful assembly with circumstances attending to justify its being returned as an unlawful assembly, it is included among the indictable offences; if it is a drive by one or two persons at night and there is no evidence of an unlawful assembly, then it is merely included in the return of cattle-drives.

Claims for Malicious Injuries.

Captain J. CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant a Return showing the numbers of claims for malicious injuries entered and awarded at the various quarter sessions in Ireland since January, 1907.

Mr. CHERRY: Part II. of the Judicial Statistics (Ireland) for 1907, now in course of preparation, will contain a table showing by counties full particulars of the claims for compensation for malicious injury to person and property, and the results of such claims. The table will be in the same form as Table 54 in the similar volume of statistics for 1906 (Cd. 3616 of 1907). I am in a position to state at once the totals for the year 1907, namely :—Number of claims, 741 ; total amount claimed, £66,768 ; number of awards of compensation, 444 ; total amount awarded, £13,040. For the details by counties I must ask the hon. Member to await the presentation of the usual statistics.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) : Will the Return include the rejected claims ?

Mr. CHERRY : Yes.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) : Out of the £66,000 claim was not a large proportion from the city of Belfast ?

Mr. CHERRY : Yes.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH : About £30,000 ?

Mr. CHERRY : I have no doubt that is so.

Mr. MOORE (Armagh, N.) : And was not damage done to the extent of £30,000 by the burning of sheds, etc., during the strike, although, as there was not deemed to be sufficient evidence, the claim was withdrawn ?

Mr. CHERRY : I only know that the claim was made and then withdrawn.

Mr. MOORE : Before making a reply which insinuates the claims were bogus—

*Mr. SPEAKER : Order, order !

Captain J. CRAIG : Will the Return be in the hands of the hon. Members before the House rises ?

Mr. CHERRY : I think so, but I cannot say for certain.

Queen's County Extra Police Claim.

Captain J. CRAIG : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant Ireland whether, in December last, the proposal committee of the Queen's County Council refused to pass a claim for £3 0s. 8d. for extra police drafted into Stradbarry in June last ; and, if so, what steps the Government have taken to recover these costs.

Mr. CHERRY : The amount in question has been deducted from the sum payable to the county council out of the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account.

Traffic in Firearms in Ireland.

Captain J. CRAIG : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his knowledge by the constabulary authorities that there has been a considerable traffic in firearms in Ireland since the withdrawal of the Peace Preservation Act towards the end of 1906 ; and what was the number of prosecutions instituted in 1907 against persons for keeping firearms without the 10s. licence required by the Gun Licence Act, 1870.

Mr. CHERRY : My right hon. friend stated, in reply to a Question on 12th instant, that there has doubtless been some increase in the traffic in firearms in Ireland, but that in the opinion of the police authorities the increase is not more than would ordinarily follow the removal of a restriction as to carrying arms. I am informed by the Board of Inland Revenue that the number of prosecutions instituted against persons in Ireland for carrying guns without licence in 1907 was 252.

Longford Extra Police Charge.

Captain J. CRAIG : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the county council of county Longford have refused to pay the extra police charges for the better preservation of peace in the county ; and whether he will inform the House how many local authorities have similarly refused, and what steps the Government propose to take to ensure payment of the above rate.

Mr. CHERRY : The councils of County Longford and six other counties have objected to pay the charges for extra police in respect of the half-year ending 30th September, 1907. In the case of two of the counties the amounts have been deducted from sums payable to the counties out of the Local Taxation (Ireland) Account, and a similar course will be adopted in regard to the other five counties, including Longford, if payment should ultimately be refused.

Fuge Estate, Buttevant, County Cork.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners are aware that on the Fuge estate, Templemary, near Buttevant, county Cork, there are, approximately, 1,000 acres of untenanted land; and whether, in view of the fact that there are six or seven evicted families in the district who formerly occupied these lands and who are anxious for reinstatement, the Commissioners will take immediate steps with a view to acquiring these lands which are now partially used as a grazing ranch.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have approached Mr. Richard Fuge in pursuance of the regulations with a view to purchasing about 350 acres of untenanted land in his occupation. A preliminary estimate of the price which the Commissioners are prepared to offer has been furnished to Mr. Fuge, and the matter is pending.

Untenanted Doneraile (Cork) Lands.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether it has been brought to the knowledge of the Estates Commissioners that there is a quantity of untenanted land in the Doneraile district, county Cork, including land on the estate of Lady Castletown; and whether, in view of the fact that many evicted tenants in the locality are anxiously looking for suitable agricultural holdings, the Commissioners will make inquiry into the feasibility of acquiring a portion of those lands.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners are not at present negotiating for the purchase of the untenanted land alleged to exist on the estate of Lady Castletown, but will cause inquiries to be made in regard to such land.

MR. FLYNN: My Question was not intended to refer solely to the Doneraile portion of the Castletown estate, but to other lands also in the immediate neighbourhood.

MR. CHERRY: Of course, the Commissioners will deal with the entire estate.

County Cork Untenanted Lands.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have yet taken any definite steps towards acquiring untenanted lands in the county of Cork, with a view to the restoration of evicted tenants, the enlargement of uneconomic holdings, and the acquisition of labourers' plots, under the provisions of the Act of 1903, and the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907; how many inspectors are now engaged in the county inquiring into the cases of evicted tenants seeking reinstatement; and whether the Commissioners intend, in regard to the appointment of inspectors, to send them into districts the needs and circumstances of which they have already inquired into.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have been making inquiries in County Cork as elsewhere with the object of acquiring untenanted land. Nine inspectors and assistant inspectors are at present engaged in the province of Munster in dealing with the cases of evicted tenants and the acquisition of untenanted land. These inspectors are employed in the particular county or district in that province in which their services are most needed for the time being.

MR. FLYNN: The Chief Secretary sometime ago promised to communicate with the Estates Commissioners with a view to having the inspectors retained in the districts with which they have some acquaintance, instead of being shifted about from one locality to another. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of that, and has it been done?

MR. CHERRY: I am not aware of it, but I am sure my right hon. friend will fulfil any promise he has made. As a matter of fact, I do not know if the inspectors are shifted about or not.

Mr. FLYNN: The promise was made last session.

Medical Inspection of Irish School Children.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolution of the Irish Committee of the British Medical Association, urging the necessity of the medical inspection of school children in Ireland on the lines already adopted by legislation with regard to England; and whether, having regard to the fact that every argument for such inspection in England applies with even greater force to Ireland, he will consider whether steps can be taken to give effect to this recommendation.

Mr. CHERRY: My right hon. friend's attention has been called to the resolution in question, and the matter has been engaging his consideration. My right hon. friend agrees with the Commissioners of National Education that the medical inspection of school children in Ireland would be desirable, but he is confronted with the fact that under the English legislation the duty of providing for the medical inspection of children is a duty of the local education authority. The effect of this enactment is to require the local authority to find from the rates the funds necessary to defray the charges of this new service. The matter will continue to engage my right hon. friend's attention.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Is it not the fact that large grants are made from the Exchequer for this purpose in England?

Mr. CHERRY: That question should be addressed to the President of the Board of Education.

Labourers Cottages at Letterkenny.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the cause of the delay by the Letterkenny Rural District Council in carrying out the provisions of the Labourers Acts throughout their division, where many of the labourers are living in unsanitary hovels; and, seeing the hardships under which these labourers suffer whether he will direct the Local Government Board to send an inspector to inquire into the delay, and take immediate steps to have the necessary cottages erected to provide the comfort for which the Acts were passed.

Mr. CHERRY: The inquiry into the scheme made by the Council under the new Act for seventy-eight cottages was opened on the 3rd October last, and after inspection of sites and consideration of the evidence given at the Inquiry, the Inspector's Order was signed on 23rd November, provisionally authorising seventy-one cottages. Copies of the Order had then to be served by the clerk of the council on the persons interested, who are allowed a period of five weeks within which to appeal. The Order has been confirmed by the Local Government Board for sixty-eight cottages, the remaining three being the subject of petition to the County Court Judge. As soon as the Board receive the requisite application from the Council they will appoint an arbitrator to determine the price to be paid for the lands affected by the scheme, and the Council, can, if necessary, at once enter on the lands subject to the conditions as to lodgment of security and payment of interest mentioned in Sec. 4 of the Act of 1896.

Fenwick Estate, County Donegal.

Mr. CHARLES MACVEIGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners was called to the advertised sale of the demesne lands on the Fenwick estate, Greenhill, near Convoy, County Donegal, in October last, the estate having been sold previously to the tenants; whether he is aware that this demesne is let annually on the eleven months' system; and whether, seeing that it is, or was, for sale, he will direct the Estates Commissioners to purchase it for distribution amongst the adjoining farmers who have uneconomic holdings.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners will make inquiries with the object of ascertaining whether the untenanted land in question is such as it would be desirable for them to acquire. If they consider the land to be suitable, they will approach the owner with a view to purchasing it.

Mr. Persse, of Woodville, Galway.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that in March, 1905, Mr. Henry Persse, of Woodville, county Galway, applied to the authorities in Dublin for police protection; if this application was refused; whether he can state if the application was refused as the result of local inquiries or as the result of reports received from the local police; and if he will publish the Report upon which the Government acted.

MR. CHERRY: The Woodville Farm was taken on lease by Mr. Henry Persse, for forty-nine years, from 1st May, 1904. Mr. Persse went to reside on the farm on or about 1st January, 1905. Prior to that date he had applied for a police hut to be erected on the farm for the protection of himself and his property. He was informed that it was not considered necessary to erect a police hut, but that he would be given the fullest measure of protection which the circumstances demanded. Upon his going into residence at Woodville, early in January, three policemen were placed there, and he provided them with the necessary house accommodation. After the alleged attack on the house on 2nd March, 1905, Mr. Persse renewed his application for a police hut on the farm. This request was not complied with, as, in the opinion of the police authorities, the protection which was being afforded at the time was entirely adequate. The reports made by the police in such cases are confidential documents, and it would be entirely contrary to practice to disclose their contents.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Is it the fact that the lodge was rented by the Government for the purposes of the police?

MR. CHERRY: I think it was for a short time.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: How much was paid?

MR. CHERRY: I am not quite sure, but I think £2 per month.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): Has Mr. Persse been under police protection since March, 1905?

MR. CHERRY: Yes, Sir.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that in March, 1905, a telegram was received by the authorities in Ireland from Mr. Henry Persse, of Woodville, County Galway, to the effect that an attack had been made upon his house by a band of moonlighters, that several shots had been fired into the house, and that he had returned the fire and pursued the moonlighters; whether a police investigation was held into the matter; and did the authorities, as the result of this investigation, arrive at the conclusion that no such attack had in fact been made, that no shots had been fired at or into the house, and that the whole statement contained in the telegram was untrue.

MR. CHERRY: An attack was alleged to have been made on Mr. Persse's house on the night of 2nd March, 1905. The receipt of a telegram on the subject from Mr. Persse cannot be traced, but on 3rd March Mr. Persse wrote to the Under-Secretary stating that men came up to his very door the night before and committed a very daring outrage, and adding that while the intimidation which then reigned in that unfortunate neighbourhood was allowed to run its course there would be no peace or safety for loyal subjects. The newspapers of the time contained reports to the effect that Mr. Persse's house was attacked by a band of moonlighters who fired shots into it. The ordinary investigations were made by the police authorities into the matter, but no special inquiry was held. As a result of these investigations the authorities arrived at the conclusion that a stone had been thrown through the fanlight of Mr. Persse's hall-door by some person, but there was no evidence to show that more than one person was concerned in the matter. The police on protection duty were at Woodville House at the time of the occurrence, and, so far as they were aware, the only shots fired on the occasion were fired by Mr. Persse himself. The police on hearing the shots at once came to the front of the house, but found no persons there except Mr. Persse himself and one of his servant men. A second servant man was found on the lawn about 100 yards away. A police patrol which was approaching Woodville heard the shots and hastened to the place, but they also saw no strangers about.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: May I gather from that answer that the inquiries made by the authorities satisfied them that the story published so widely, not only in this country, but through the world, of a moonlight attack on this house was quite unfounded.

MR. CHERRY: That appears to be the natural inference.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG asked whether it was not a fact that Mr. Persse never informed the authorities that several shots had been fired into the house, but that shots had been fired by him while in pursuit of persons whom he supposed had committed an outrage, and not as they might be led to suppose from the right hon. Gentleman's answer that Mr. Persse himself had fired the shots into the house.

MR. CHERRY said that he had quoted the words of Mr. Persse's letter, in which he said—"Men came up to my door last night and committed a very daring outrage."

MR. JOHN REDMOND asked whether the newspaper account did not appear in the *Irish Times*, and whether the reporter did not profess to give an interview with Mr. Persse, quoting the words that he was alleged to have used.

CAPTAIN J. CRAIG: Is it not the fact that Mr. Persse is rigorously boycotted?

MR. MOORE: Is it not the fact that, as soon as Mr. Persse was communicated with, the *Irish Times* and the *Freeman's Journal*, within twenty-four hours, published a revised account setting out——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The right hon. Gentleman is not responsible for what appeared in the newspapers.

MR. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman send a copy of the answer to the Duchess of St. Albans and ask her to have it read at her next drawing-room?

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Woodville Farm, Kilchreest, Loughrea, at present in the possession of Mr. Harry Persse, was let by the landlord, Lord Clanricarde, as an ordinary eleven months' letting for thirty years before Mr. Persse went into possession; did the grazing tenants, in possession, immediately preceding the handing over of the farm to Mr. Persse by Lord Clanricarde, recognise the need of distributing these untenanted lands amongst the small mountain tenants living in the vicinity by vacating the farm in favour of the tenants; and, when the sale of this property comes to be effected, will the Estates Commissioners advance public funds to this gentleman to enable him to defeat the intentions of the Act of 1903.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that the Woodville Farm was taken on lease by Mr. Henry Persse for forty-nine years from 1st May, 1904. The farm had been let for grazing during the previous seven or eight years, before which period it had been held on lease. I have no information as to whether the grazing tenants surrendered the grazing, or if they did, what their motive for doing so may have been. As to the concluding part of the Question, the Estates Commissioners inform me that they cannot express any opinion as to what advance, if any, they could make to Mr. Persse for the purchase of the farm in question, until proceedings for sale are instituted before them.

MR. DUFFY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether Mr. Henry Persse, of Woodville, County Galway, was prosecuted before Mr. Jasper White, R.M., and Mr. James Geraghty, J.P., at Loughrea petty sessions in the year 1906, and fined £20 for shooting game and carrying a gun without a licence.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that on 19th April, 1906, Mr. Henry Persse was prosecuted before the magistrates named in the Question, for killing game without a licence, and was fined £5.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Is this Mr. Persse a justice of the peace and will the right hon. Gentleman communicate with the Lord Chancellor and ask if he considers it right that a person convicted of poaching and fined £5 should hold the commission of the peace?

MR. MOORE: Is it not the fact that Mr. Persse was appointed a magistrate on a memorial signed by the hon. Member for Galway, and is not this the only blot on an otherwise blameless career?

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer my Question, and may I further ask if he has sent the Lord Chancellor the Papers concerning the assault for which this gentleman's brother—another J.P.—was convicted?

MR. CHERRY: If my hon. friend wishes I will communicate with the Lord Chancellor, but the matter dates so far back as 1906; as to the other question I have no official information.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: But the official information was communicated to the House.

MR. CHERRY: It may have been by my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Will you inquire?

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: And will the right hon. Gentleman inquire who signed the memorial?

MR. DUFFY: As far as I am concerned, I have nothing to do with Mr. Persse's appointment as a magistrate.

MR. MOORE: Will the Attorney-General obtain the memorial for the Lord Chancellor?

*MR. BYLES: Am I to understand from these answers that this gentleman punished for shooting game, was allowed to go unpunished for shooting at men who had broken his windows?

MR. CHERRY: They are different persons.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at what date was Mr. Persse placed under special protection by patrols from adjoining police stations; what was the date of the application made by Mr. Persse for protection, which it is alleged was refused; was his application one for the erection of a police hut, the cost of the men employed to be levied off the district; was the refusal to erect a hut advised by the local responsible authorities, who were of opinion that adequate protection could be afforded otherwise, and that the cost of the force could not legally be charged to the district in the circumstance existing at this period; was not Mr. Persse receiving special protection by patrols at the date of the refusal to put up a hut; and at what date were police quartered on his premises for the purpose of giving him constant protection.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that Mr. Persse was first afforded protection by police patrols about the beginning of September, 1904, when he resided at Millmount. In the months of October and November, 1904, he made several applications, both by letter and orally, for the erection of a police hut on the Woodville property upon his going to reside there, and suggested that the cost of the police should be charged on the locality. The local police authorities considered that the protection which was being afforded to Mr. Persse was quite adequate, but having regard to his manifest apprehensions it was decided to quarter police upon his premises at Woodville on condition that he should find house accommodation for them. The application for a police hut was refused, but not upon the ground that the cost of the police could not be legally charged to the district. That question did not enter into consideration at any time. Mr. Persse was receiving protection by patrols at the date of the refusal to erect a hut. When he went into residence at Woodville early in January, 1905, three policemen were quartered at the house. In May of that year the police were moved to the gate lodge, upon Mr. Persse's representation that he needed the rooms then occupied. The police are still quartered at the gate lodge, and the number has been increased to four.

Clanricarde Estate.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the planters upon the Clanricarde estate have agreed to give up to the Estates Commissioners possession of the lands from which the original tenants were evicted, with a view of having them reintsated under the Bill of last year; whether he is aware that Lord Clanricarde has invoked the aid of the Law Courts to prevent the intention of the Act being carried out upon his estate; and what steps the Government intend to take in this matter.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that a number of tenants on the Clanricarde estate have intimated that they are prepared, on terms, to give up possession of lands from which the original tenants were evicted. Lord Clanricarde has questioned the power of the Commissioners to deal with the matter, and some of the questions involved form the subject of a decision by Mr. Justice Wylie on the 25th instant. The learned Judge held that the Commissioners are not debarred from acquiring the lands on the grounds argued before him. The Commissioners understand, however, that his decision will form the subject of appeal. The Commissioners will proceed with the matter, if it be decided that they have the legal power to do so.

Police at Irish Railway Stations.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what are the existing instructions to the police regarding their attendance at railway stations in Ireland; whether these instructions are the same as those issued to the force in 1905; if not, in what respect do they differ; and has the Inspector-General any reason to believe that a further modification of the instructions is at present called for.

MR. CHERRY: The existing regulations prohibit the Royal Irish Constabulary from attending regularly at railway stations without the special authority of the Inspector-General, but the police are not prohibited from attending when their attendance is required in the discharge of police duty. These regulations were issued in 1904, and have not since been changed. The Inspector-General is not aware of any reason for modifying the existing instructions, which have worked satisfactorily.

Tuberculosis in Ireland.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolutions adopted at public meetings in connection with the series of tuberculosis exhibitions recently held in Ireland; whether the Local Government Board intend to take any steps to make tuberculosis compulsorily notifiable; whether the various boards of education in Ireland have been communicated with on the subject of making compulsory the teaching of hygiene and domestic science in all schools; and whether it is intended to make provision in the immediate future for the official supervision of dairies and of the sale of food.

MR. CHERRY: Several resolutions such as are referred to have been received. The Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill, which my right hon. friend is to introduce, will contain a clause providing for the compulsory notification of tuberculosis. The Local Government Board have been in correspondence with the Commissioners of National Education upon the subject of teaching hygiene and domestic science in national schools. The official supervision of dairies and of the sale of food will be dealt with in the Tuberculosis Prevention Bill and in a new Dairies Order which the Local Government Board are about to issue.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: When will the Bill be introduced?

MR. CHERRY: I cannot say.

Drainage of the Barrow.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether at his request a scheme for the improvement of the River Barrow, as an outfall for the drainage of a large district which periodically suffers from floods, has been gratuitously prepared by Messrs. Glover and White, county surveyors for Kildare and Queen's counties, respectively, and submitted to him; whether it is the essence of the scheme that it can be carried out for a much smaller sum than was estimated for the more comprehensive proposals recommended by the Allport and other Commissions, and at the same time be made effectual for the prevention of many of the lesser floods in the affected district; has he considered the said scheme; and does he intend at an early date to put it into operation.

MR. CHERRY: My right hon. friend has received the report which was prepared, at the request of the Barrow Drainage Committee, by Messrs. Glover and White, suggesting certain works for the improvement of the River Barrow. It is somewhat misleading to suggest that the report was prepared at the request of my right hon. friend. In December last a deputation waited upon the Chief Secretary and asked for a Government grant of £50,000 to improve the river. The Chief Secretary, in reply, warned the deputation that he was anxious to avoid raising hopes that might not be fulfilled, but, with a view to the further consideration of the matter, asked to be furnished with a short expert statement showing how the money would be expended. As a result the report in question was submitted to him. The Board of Works have been asked to report upon Messrs. Glover and White's scheme, but the Board's Report has not yet been received.

MR. MOORE: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend that the drainage of the Barrow shall have precedence of the drainage of the Bann?

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Ought not the Scariff district to have priority in this matter?

MR. CHERRY: I will leave it to my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary to settle the delicate question of priority.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: Have not hundreds of thousands of pounds been spent on the Bann and nothing on the Barrow in the last few years?

[No Answer was returned.]

City of Dublin Registers.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that requisition forms issued by the town clerk of the City of Dublin for the purpose of ascertaining the persons entitled to the franchise as inhabitant householders have been improperly collected and filled up by party registration agents with the names of unqualified persons, and signed with the landlord's name without his authority; and whether he proposes to take any action in reference to the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The allegation contained in the Question was brought to my notice, and I directed inquiries to be made some time ago with the object of instituting a prosecution. The inquiries are being made, and if the evidence available is sufficient a prosecution will be instituted.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that at the Greenstrent Police Court, Dublin, before Judge Gibson, in 1902, a well-known magistrate was convicted of tampering with the registration form for the county of Dublin?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of that.

Winter Dairying in Ireland.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he can now state what practical steps are being taken by the Department towards the establishment of a system of winter dairying in Ireland; is he aware that the exports of dairy produce, poultry, and eggs from Ireland in 1906 amounted to £9,300,000. as compared with £8,927,000 value of the exports of cattle; and whether, in view of the increased employment of labour involved in a sound system of all-year-round dairying, the Department will place itself in communication with the county committees of agriculture, with a view to the early adoption of that system.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The Department have repeatedly advocated the extension of winter dairying in Ireland, but although the desirability of such extension is freely admitted, farmers are slow to move in such a matter. In 1906 the Department, to acquire accurate data of returns from winter dairying in Ireland, started an experiment at the agricultural station at Clonakilty, county Cork, and this experiment is still being continued. In the autumn of 1907 a more extended series of experiments under the control of the Department was inaugurated in connection with the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Cork County Committee of Agriculture, and the Centenary Co-operative Creamery, Ballyduff, county Tipperary. The Department do not propose to take any further action until the results of these experiments are available. An extension of tillage is necessary before the winter dairying can be increased, and the Department, through the county committees and otherwise, are doing all that is practicable to check the decline of tillage, and to induce the farmers to increase the area under the plough. The estimated value of the exports of dairy produce, poultry, eggs, and bacon, etc., from Ireland in 1906 is £9,799,069, and of cattle, £9,146,915. My hon. friend will be glad to learn that the income derivable from these subsidiary industries is steadily rising each year.

MR. FLYNN: The Government having boldly set these schemes on foot, may we take it they will not grow faint-hearted in the desire to promote them?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Department is as anxious as the hon. Member himself to promote winter dairying. We are quite aware of the loss it is to Ireland.

Steam Trawling on the Kerry Coast.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether his attention has been called to the continued fishing by steam trawlers within the legal limits off the coast of Ballinskelligs, county Kerry, in spite of the prosecutions which have been undertaken by the Department; and whether, in view of the damage thereby caused to the local fishermen, and to the submarine cable of the cable companies whose offices are in that district, he will take prompt steps to prohibit trawling in these waters.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Department have not received this year any such report although they have a paid officer in the locality to report any illegal trawling that may be observed. The Department's cruiser was in the vicinity several times in the present month and did not observe any illegal trawling.

Irish Butter Competitions.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether, owing to the appointment by the Department of an unqualified creamery instructor in the early part of last season, 100 out of 128 creameries entered for the Department's surprise butter competitions withdrew from the same, notwithstanding that the Department appealed to the presidents and proprietors of the creameries to forward the exhibits; whether the Irish Creamery Managers' Association and several conferences of co-operative creamery societies have protested against this appointment; and whether, in view of the dissatisfaction thus shown, he will consider the advisability of having these appointments made in future by competitive examination.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The Department does not admit that an unqualified creamery instructor was appointed in the early part of 1907. Apart from this allegation it is the case that of 128 creameries entered for the competition in September, 1907, 28 (not 100) withdrew. On the occasion of the subsequent competition 47 creameries sent exhibits, and 28 other creameries intimated that at the request of the Irish Creamery Managers' Association they would not send any further exhibits, seven additional creameries declined to send exhibits for reasons in no way connected with the appointment referred to. As stated in reply to a previous Question, the Department is not prepared to confine the appointment of creamery instructors to the managers of creameries, nor is it thought that appointment by competitive examination would secure the best men.

Question time being past,

The Zakka Khel Expedition.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) asked the Speaker whether, as a matter of urgent public importance, he might ask the Secretary for India a Question standing on the Order Paper which had not yet been reached—namely, Whether the punitive expedition against the Zakka Khels was to be followed by any further steps leading to permanent occupation of the country of that tribe.

MR. SPEAKER having intimated that the Question might be put,

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. MORLEY, Montrose Burghs) said: The Answer is in the negative; the Government of India have been instructed to take no steps leading in any way towards permanent occupation of the country, and orders have been issued in this sense to the general in command of the expedition. His Majesty's Government intend no departure from the principles of frontier policy laid down by the Secretary of State ten years ago, the purport of those principles being that there is to be no extension of our responsibilities in tribal territory; and no interference with the tribes whenever it can possibly be avoided. These principles were again affirmed by another Secretary of State in 1904, and they have been uniformly pursued by successive Governments ever since 1898. For reasons which it would be against the public interest to set out to-day, the general arguments against any reversal of this policy are particularly strong in the present case. The object of the expedition against the Zakkas is limited to punishment for a long series of lawless outrages against the life and property of peaceful dwellers in British territory whom we are bound to protect.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked as to the course of business for next week, and when the Memorandum on the Education Bill would be in the hands of Members.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.) said it was hoped, he understood, that the Memorandum explanatory of the provisions of the Education Bill would have been circulated to-day—but it certainly would not be delayed more than a day or two. With regard to the business for next week, the Government proposed on Monday to take the discussion on the Motion that stood in the name of the hon. Member for Falkirk Burghs, and on the succeeding days, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Army and Navy Estimates.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR inquired which Estimates would be taken first.

MR. ASQUITH: The Navy Estimates, Sir.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

First Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

NEW BILLS.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BILL.

"To amend The Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, 1884," presented by Mr. Cleland; supported by

Mr. Arthur Allen, Mr. McCrae, Mr. Barnes, Major Coates, Mr. Younger, Mr. Mooney, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson, Mr. Adkins, and Mr. McKinnon Wood; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 120.]

RESTRAINT OF TRADES (SHOPS) BILL.

"To render null and void certain provisions of shop assistants' agreements," presented by Mr. Seddon; supported by Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith, Mr. Shackleton, Mr. Price, Mr. Clement Edwards, and Mr. Arthur Henderson; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 121.]

PUBLIC LIBRARIES BILL.

"To amend the Acts relating to Public Libraries," presented by Mr. Tennant; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 122.]

DOGS (INJURIES TO PERSONS) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Injuries to persons by Dogs," presented by Mr. Dundas White; supported by Mr. Crombie, Dr. Shipman, Lord Robert Cecil, Sir John Jardine, Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards, and Mr. Herbert; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th April, and to be printed. [Bill 123.]

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT.

MR. MACLEAN (Bath) said that in asking leave to introduce this Bill he wished to explain that he had ventured to bring it in under the Ten Minute Rule, because, while they all had sympathy with the agitation proceeding on behalf of dwellers in the country districts, and in the slums of our great cities, there was very great danger of overlooking the injustice from which dwellers in town houses and shopkeepers, and the thousands of the working men cottagers in mining and quarrying districts, and leaseholders of chapels suffered. What was that injustice? It was that enormous sums of money all fell into the hands of ground landlords, who had done little or nothing to create it, it having been, in fact, created by the individual efforts of the leaseholder in particular, and of the community in general. The evils which had resulted from that system had been admirably set out by the inquiries made by a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes and by the Town Holdings Commission. The former body reported in favour of legislation for the aquisition by the leaseholder of the freehold interest, on the ground that it would greatly conduce to the improvement of the dwellings of the people and create an interest on the part of the occupier in the house he represented. The system was almost solely confined to England. The late Earl Granville, when Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, ordered an inquiry as to whether this leasehold system obtained in Europe, and he found that in fact it was only in existence in certain parts of England and Wales—in great centres of population like Cardiff and Newport, in Bath, in Cornwall and other parts of the West of England, where it inflicted very great injustice on the leaseholder. The question had been discussed in the House on two occasions already—in 1889, when the Second Reading was lost by twenty-one votes, and in 1891, when it was lost by thirteen votes. It was no party matter, and he had received an intimation from the chairman of the Conservative Association of a very large town that if it would strengthen his position he would be glad to get his association to pass a resolution in favour of it. The Bill simply proposed to remove the injustice from which owners of houses and shops in large towns, and tens of thousands of working men who owned cottages in mining districts, suffered, by giving them power to purchase the freehold at a fair sum, which in case of disagreement should be settled by a local court—the County Court or otherwise. That was a point which was open to adjustment. It also made provision whereby the present ground rent could be converted into what was known as a fee-farm rent such as at present obtained in Lancashire and some parts of Somersetshire. There were restrictions whereby the local authority could insist upon certain conditions being maintained for the public interest, and also upon the insertion of provisions, should the public interest demand it, for the purchase of the freehold by the leaseholders.

Leave having been given—

Bill to provide for the Enfranchisement of Leaseholds, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Maclean, Mr. Hay Morgan, Mr.

Brace, Mr. Ellis Griffith, Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), Mr. Gooch, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Simon, and Mr. Rees.

LEASEHOLDS (ENFRANCHISEMENT) BILL.

"To provide for the Enfranchisement of Leaseholds," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 124.]

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.), in moving to leave out "each county and borough" and insert "the county of Lanarkshire and burgh of Glasgow," said there were several general reasons why he moved this Amendment. His object was to reduce the area of financial disturbance this Bill would cause if it were ever placed on the Statute-book. If the reason given by the Government for the introduction of the measure was the real one, viz., the obtaining of reliable data as to the relative value of the land apart from the buildings on it, there could be no better criteria from which that data could be obtained than that proposed by his Amendment, while it would greatly reduce the cost of the proceeding. The already heavily burdened ratepayers in the West of Scotland were anxious to have this additional burden press as lightly as possible on them. In addition to these general reasons there were some local reasons which induced him to move his Amendment. First, he thought it was equitable that the relatively small but important area comprised within his Amendment, being the first to give birth to the agitation which had finally culminated in the present Bill, should be also the first to pay a legal toll to it. In Glasgow during the last quarter of a century a small but active group of public men had constantly kept before the public the Henry Georgian ideals of the taxation of land values embodied in this Bill, and had persuaded the corporation of the city to incur very considerable expense in pursuing a propaganda for the furtherance of those ideals. He was aware that quite recently the Court of Session had declared that that large expenditure was illegal; and it was also notable in connection with this measure that the other corporations which had joined the city of Glasgow in pushing this matter and bringing it before the public and the House of Commons had been very slow in providing their quota of that expenditure. A further local reason why he urged that the Bill should be thus limited was that the cost of the new valuation, so far at least as the experience of Glasgow was concerned, was likely to be less in that great city than in other parts of Scotland. That view was much dwelt upon by the Assessor for the city of Glasgow who in giving evidence before the Select Committee last year, said in effect that it would not greatly exceed the cost of making up the present Valuation Roll. He ventured to suggest to the Committee that that was a very strong argument in favour of his Amendment, and he thought they were bound to bear it in mind. Further, it had become evident since the Bill was last before the House that the opinion of it held by the citizens of Glasgow had considerably changed. Last week the Corporation of Glasgow passed unanimously a resolution urging that the whole additional cost of this valuation should become an Imperial charge. He submitted that that was an important element which they should be slow to disregard. This measure, they believed, was founded on a colossal delusion and was calculated to lead to overcrowding in towns and not to its lessening. Therefore he suggested that the great community which had inspired the agitation should have the honour of first legal toll to it. There was an obvious explanation for this change of attitude on the part of the Corporation of Glasgow. It had become increasingly plain since the Prime Minister made his famous declaration last autumn that the gold mine of the "existing" feu-duties was not to be taxed under this Bill that the interest of the Corporation of Glasgow had thereupon greatly lessened. If the local authorities in Scotland were not to be allowed to tax existing feu-duties they were in no wise anxious that the Bill should be placed on the Statute-book. And a further reason was that the local authorities must bear their full proportion of the cost of the new valuation under the Bill. It was exceedingly important to remember that this great change of opinion had taken place in Scotland. At one time it appeared as if there was a strong desire for legislation of this character, but ever since the Government had found it necessary to make that declaration, in great contrast to the propaganda of the Solicitor-General for Scotland during last winter, it had become increasingly evident that those who were chiefly responsible for the Bill had no great desire that the Government should further proceed with it. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, to leave out the words 'each county and burgh,' and insert the words 'the county of Lanarkshire and burgh of Glasgow.'"—(*Mr. Hugh Barrie.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'each' stand part of the clause."

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said that the reason why he supported this Amendment was that he wished to relieve his Scottish friends from the embarrassment of broken pledges. If they would cast their minds back to the agitation which had been carried on for some years, and especially before the last general election, they would remember that they promised their constituents that by supporting the taxation of land values they would be relieved from the burden of local rating; and that the whole or a large part of that burden would be placed on the shoulders of the ground landlords. That pledge those hon. Members did not propose to redeem, for the Prime Minister had intervened and told them that the Government would not allow existing contracts to be interfered with. Therefore, they would no longer be able to tax the ground landlords although some people imagined that they could. He saw that at a meeting recently held in Leicester, a gentleman referred to a speech made by himself in opposing the Bill the other day, and stated that a noble landowner in Preston drew £120,000 a year from ground rents without paying a penny of rates. That nobleman would continue to do so. This Bill would not touch that point, for the Government insisted that existing contracts must be respected, so that any new land values rate would have to be paid by existing ratepayers. Therefore, hon. Members had not kept their pledges. Not only had they failed to relieve the ratepayers, by taxing the ground landlord as they promised to do, but they were proposing by this Bill to put a new burden on the ratepayers by introducing a very expensive system of valuation. He would point out incidentally that the people who would be relieved in their rating would be primarily the ratepayers in the suburbs, and, secondarily, the owners of the land in the suburbs, because if they relieved suburban houses of rates there would be an additional profit upon building operations in the suburbs and the price of land there would go up. So that the net effect of the proposals in the Bill would be to place a new burden on the ratepayers in the centre of the town in order to enhance the property of landlords in the suburbs. His hon. friends would find that their constituencies would not approve of that policy. Hence he wanted to relieve them from an inconvenience; he wanted them to be able to say that, though they had not kept their pledges, they had except in regard to the county of Lanark and the burgh of Glasgow, imposed no new burden on Scotland. That was a very strong reason for limiting the operation of the Bill. He did not suppose that anybody really understood what the Bill proposed except the Solicitor-General for Scotland, even if he did. Very few Members realised that it was proposed in the Bill to shift all the rates from fabrics on to sites. That was the essence of the Bill. He understood that in a previous Bill it was proposed to put a 2s. rate on the land in addition to the existing rates. But the proposal at the back of this Bill was an entirely different thing. It was to sweep away the whole of the rates from buildings and put the whole burden on the land. He admitted that it was a little hard on the county of

Lanark that it should be made the vile body on which this experiment was to be made, for the County Council of Lanark had refused to petition in favour of the Bill. Still, someone must suffer if the House was determined to go on with this measure, and he wished to limit the suffering as far as possible. Another important reason for limiting the operation of the Bill was that the very elements of the problem of assessing land under this new scheme had not yet been thought out. He ventured to say that not one of the three hon. Gentlemen now on the Treasury Bench understood the measure. He pointed out the other day that complaints were often made that the country mansions of wealthy gentlemen and noblemen were not sufficiently rated at present; but that under the principles of the Bill they would be relieved of rating altogether. The Solicitor-General for Scotland replied that he was mistaken and said that the site of the mansion would be rated at a different figure from agricultural land. He ventured to say that the hon. and learned Gentleman was mistaken, because the whole principle of the Bill was that the land was to be stripped of everything on it, and if they took away the mansion there would be nothing but agricultural land value to rate. Therefore the bare agricultural land on which that mansion stood ought to be rated at the same figure as other agricultural land around it. He was sure his hon. friend would not therefore be able to sustain his contention. [The SOLICITOR-GENERAL for SCOTLAND dissented.] Well, then he was unable to understand his philosophy. Perhaps his hon. friend would explain how he proposed to put a higher rate on a field occupied by a mansion and a field occupied by potatoes? If the fields were the same size, of the same aspect, the same distance from town, and had the same amenities, why should one be rated higher than the other? There was no reason except that when they began to apply a Bill like this the folly of the whole Henry Georgite system became evident, and they had to go back to the reasonable and commonsense plan of taxing where they could get the money. In New Zealand, where there was an application of Henry George's principles, he was informed that the assessors always tried to get more out of a big than out of a little house, although the sites occupied were identical. His hon. friend had also shown that he had not gone definitely into this question of assessment. He (Mr. Cox) had put a certain case. He said that in a certain Scottish town there was a belt of 600 acres of land, all of which was equally valuable for building, but the town grew at such a rate that only ten acres a year were disposed of. Consequently the owners of these 600 acres of land were in this position, that when they sold an acre they got £1,000 for it, but only ten such acres could be sold in a year. He wanted to know, were all these 600 acres to be valued at the rate of £1,000 an acre? If not, at what rate were they to be valued? There was no answer to that problem. How were they to draw the line? The owner might not be able to sell another acre for ten or twenty years, and it would be most unjust to him if he was compelled during all that period to pay a tax based upon a value which he could not realise. He contended that it was impossible to lay down any principle on which an assessor could proceed, unless they took the realised value. If they had land producing an actual rent, of £3 a year, that was a definite value they could go upon; but if, as in the case he had put, land might not be sold for twenty years, and meanwhile the owner was taxed on the supposition that his land was worth £1,000 an acre, the grossest possible injustice would be inflicted upon him. There was another point which could be tested by this proposal, and that was the very difficult question of taxing the unearned increment. His hon. friend the Member for West Aberdeen the other day had argued that, although he was totally opposed to the principle of the Bill, yet he would vote for it because it opened the door to the taxing of the unearned increment. The hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Dulwich, dealt in a very effective manner with the general question of taxing unearned increment and pointed out the fallacy of drawing a distinction between unearned increment of land or any other source of wealth, including even brain power. He did not, however, want to go into that question, but he wanted the Committee to consider this point. The authority of John Stuart Mill had been quoted, but he ventured to say that John Stuart Mill was wrong on this point as he was wrong on other points. Mill started with the same maxim with which His Majesty's Government started, that they must not confiscate existing values. Mill went on to say that they should take the value of the land as it stood to-day, and if it rose in value then tax the unearned increment. That was a proposition which his hon. friend the Member for West Aberdeen supported; but he thought the Committee would see that if that course were followed they would be confiscating part of the present value, because that value partly depended upon the present estimation of what the value was likely to be in the future. When a man bought land he took into account the prospect of its rising and the risk of its falling, and those elements helped to determine the present price. If, therefore, they said to a man who had bought land, "We will take away from you all chance of the increase in the value of the land but will leave you with a chance of a decrease of the value," then by so doing they depreciated the present value. It was a somewhat subtle point, but he thought he was right in saying that if they confiscated the unearned increment they also confiscated part of the present value unless they guaranteed the owner against an unearned decrement. These were two or three points which could be settled by this experimental legislation, but there was another point to which he would like to call attention. He thought the Lord-Advocate laid very great stress upon the value of this Bill for dealing with the housing problem. The Bill would give the city of Glasgow an opportunity of testing that value, and he hoped their experience would not be the same as that of the London County Council. The London County Council in the year 1901 purchased 225 acres of land in the county of Middlesex for the purpose of a housing scheme. At the end of 1904 they had succeeded in developing only five of those 225 acres. Why? Because the people did not come. [An HON. MEMBER: "No."] Because the population did not come. [An HON. MEMBER: "No."] His hon. friend below the bar interrupted him on that point, and perhaps he had private sources of information. He was quoting from the published reports of the London County Council, and he saw in their housing report that it was unnecessary and would be uneconomical to further develop this large estate of 225 acres because the people were not coming to the land; they were not wanting more houses. If this system of taxing land values came into operation, what would happen? On what principle would the vacant 220 acres be taxed. On their urban value? They were bought at the urban value, and they remained there having a potential urban value.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.): They would be taxed on their actual value.

*MR. HAROLD COX: That is the agricultural value.

MR. A. DEWAR: Their actual worth in the market.

*MR. HAROLD COX: Their actual worth in the market is a speculative value, and the London County Council has to be taxed on a speculative value although it cannot use it.

MR. A. DEWAR was understood to say that they would in this case be taxed on their agricultural value.

*MR. HAROLD COX said that there they had a confession that the doctrines which these hon. Gentlemen had been preaching up and down the country, that landlords were robbing the poor by keeping the land out of the market, were all a delusion. If all this County Council building estate ought to be taxed only at its agricultural value, why should other land that was waiting for development pay at a higher rate?

MR. A. DEWAR said that the particular land to which his hon. friend referred by his own showing was only of agricultural value, and therefore would be rated at agricultural value. But there were other lands kept out of cultivation which would have a higher value. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman must not say that any land out of cultivation would be fixed at an agricultural value.

*MR. HAROLD COX said the land was bought by the London County Council at an urban value, but the hon. Gentleman said that now it had only an agricultural value. Why did he give his faith to the London County Council which was the landlord in this case and refuse his faith to the other landlords? How was the assessor to act when the landlord said he could only let land for agricultural purposes, and what was the landlord to do when the assessor said he should tax him on the land at the urban value? This was very important, because he was sure that the ratepayers of London, of whom he was one, would not agree to be taxed in order to put money into the pockets of the ratepayers of Middlesex. But there were other difficulties in regard to assessment, and there was one very great difficulty which he was surprised that his right hon. friend the Lord Advocate did not see, and that was the costliness of the legal proceedings which this method of valuation would involve. In the Queensland Report, to which his right hon. friend had devoted such profound study, at pages 10 and 11 there was a very interesting comment on the difficulty of getting a final legal decision on the many complex questions arising directly they tried to treat land, not as it actually was, but as somebody imagined it had been in times gone by. The writer of the book said it took several years to bring the State valuation upon a basis which would "stand the ordeal of the Appeal Courts." That was in a new country where everything was comparatively simple, where the improvements had mostly happened during the lifetime of men now living. How many years would elapse before they could get a basis in Scotland which would stand the ordeal of the Appeal Courts, and how many thousands and tens of thousands of pounds would pass from the pockets of private citizens into the pockets of the lawyers before that was accomplished? He would refer to another matter which the Solicitor-General for Scotland had rather overlooked. In speaking the other day on this question he tried to reassure the House as to the difficulties of this method of assessment; he told them that what was proposed to be done had already been done for twenty years in the seven counties in Scotland where the Crofters Acts applied, where the rating had been fixed upon the land apart from buildings and improvements. That was the statement made by the Solicitor-General, but he was afraid that it meant that he was either unfamiliar with the terms of the Bill or with the terms of the Crofters Act. The Bill provided that the land was to be rated as if it were divested of buildings and improvements of whatever nature on, in, or under soil; but what was the case under the Crofters Acts in Scotland? He had a book dealing with the Crofters Acts, and it contained the Report of the Commissioners on fixing fair rents in Scotland. They put to themselves the question on what lines were they to proceed to arrive at a rent that was fair. They came to the conclusion that if the landlord made the improvements the crofter should pay for them; that if the crofter made them he could not in fairness be asked to pay rent for them; but that if he had made an agreement with his landlord to make the improvements, and to receive an equivalent for their value from the landlord, then again rent should be paid for them. So that it was not accurate to say that rents in the crofter counties were paid for the bare land without improvements. The fair rents of crofters' holdings were totally different from the kind of thing this Bill proposed, and therefore he hoped the hon. and learned Gentleman would take the earliest opportunity of undeceiving the House on that matter. The Lord Advocate having said that England was fifty years behind Scotland in this matter he had been at some pains to try and discover where the backwardness of England lay. He gathered from the speech of the Lord Advocate that it lay in the fact that we had a local system of valuation, and that Scotland had a national system.

MR. THOMAS SHAW: Does my hon. friend realise that there is no annual system in this country, and does he not realise that an annual system is better than a quinquennial system?

***Mr. HAROLD COX** said he recognised that, but he understood the hon. Member to say there was a central body in Scotland.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW was understood to say there was no central body for this purpose.

***Mr. HAROLD COX** said he had gathered that there was in Scotland a system of national valuation, which was conducted by a body of land value assessors; that they were a body of expert officials in Scotland, a central body of Commissioners.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW said that in consequence of the frequent suggestions that were made in reference to his hon. and learned friend the Solicitor-General, he wished to say there was no ground for what the hon. Gentleman had just said in anything that had been said by his hon. and learned friend or himself. It was a total perversion of the Scottish system. There were no Central Commissioners in Scotland, and the thing had not been heard of since the year 1854.

***Mr. HAROLD COX** said he had merely asked for information. He, at all events, understood that one of the great merits of the Scottish system was that they had a more expert system of valuation in Scotland than obtained in this country. He wished to know whether the Government had any information from any official source as to the possiblity of carrying out this assessment. That went to the root of the difficulty. If the expert land valuers were not prepared to carry out this Bill, it would be very difficult to carry it out at all. [An Hon. Member: Yes, they are.] His hon. friend said they were, but he held a letter in his hand from a gentleman, who described himself as one of the officials who would have to perform the work under this Bill. That gentleman said——

Mr. URE: What is his name?

Mr. Thomas Shaw.

***Mr. HAROLD COX**: He is an official, so I cannot give his name; but he is one of the officials who will have to perform the work of this Bill. This is what he said—

> "The idea of valuing or fixing the price as sold by a willing seller of a metaphysical abstraction is absurd beyond words. The poor owner has just to imagine the land back in its primeval, unimproved, undrained, unreclaimed state, bare of walls, buildings and every erection or improvement on, in, or under the soil, subject to the further qualification that the benefit thereof is unexhausted at the time of valuation. How is this to be done? In England even Domesday Book would be too modern for such an investigation, and how is the assessor to fix this value of an idea? He does not know, even if one present owner does, the history of the land since it emerged from its first unimproved state; he will want to dig up the soil to see if the drains, that the owner says are there, are now working properly and their benefit unexhausted. The question is endless and then after all a selling price is to be imposed on this mental fiction. No two persons in this world could agree on the figures. Disputes and litigation (and they can litigate here) will overwhelm the people, and the administration will be reduced to chaos. Let it not be said that it has been given in evidence that this work is possible. It has not. The utmost that has been said by any witness is that it is possible to separate buildings above the soil from land as it now is, but never as it was in the dim past, never to value these roads before they were made. To put a value on such fictions is just as unreasonable as to fix the income-tax assessment on the amount a man might be expected to be annually worth conceived as uneducated, untrained, and before he specialised."

As that was the written opinion of one of the experienced valuers who would have to put this Bill into operation it was desirable that the operation of the Bill should be limited as far as possible.

***Mr. YOUNGER** (Ayr Burghs) said his only objection to the Amendment of his hon. friend was that it did not go far enough. No doubt the city of Glasgow and the county of Lanark were in themselves difficult to value, but they were not typical by any means of the whole of Scotland. If the Government were likely to accept this Amendment —the probability was they were not— he would have suggested an Amendment to it to the effect that in addition to the county of Lanark and the city of Glasgow it should include the county of Perth and the burgh of Alloa. He suggested those additions because the county of

Perth was typical of its class. It was neither a manufacturing nor mineral county as Lanark was, but it had fishings and shootings of great value and agricultural interests of great importance, and in that sense it undoubtedly was a difficult county to value. He proposed the burgh of Alloa for two reasons, because, first, it was a town which existed largely on its manufacturing industries, and, second, its valuation results would be extremely valuable in so far that it would be seen by these that to put all local taxation on site values would be absolutely absurd. He would be very sorry for the right hon. Member representing that town if the Government were to prosecute their scheme to the bitter end. He feared that in such an event the House would have to regret the right hon. Member's absence from their discussions, because there would not be a vote left for him in his constituency. The Lord Advocate had expressed a hope that the figures would not be reopened, and he certainly did not propose to give them again, but he thought the Government ought to proceed in this matter by simple and cautious stages. Why should the whole of Scotland be plunged into this difficulty in order that the Government might obtain statistics which would be of no use? It might be possible to rate on site values in such places as the city of Glasgow, but at the same time it would be manifestly unfair to do so. The people in the centre of the city would be penalised for the benefit of those in the suburbs and similarly in similar towns. When hon. Gentlemen opposite had pointed out to them what the effect would be in a matter of this kind they always got out of the difficulty by suggesting the putting in of an option clause in the rating Bill. His proposition was that something of the kind should be inserted in this Bill. Why should they have all this worry and trouble and annoyance in all these burghs unless the taxing authorities in Scotland thought the valuation would be of value? The hon. Member for Preston had gone into the matter, and in dealing with this Amendment had put many points of great interest. But there was one point he had not quite exhausted and which was a most important one. In discussing the argument of the Solicitor-General in regard to annual valuation in the crofting counties, the whole point was missed. The Solicitor-General's argument was that this particular kind of valuation was being made every year in the seven crofting counties of Scotland. Nobody knew better than the Solicitor-General for Scotland that this valuation was an annual and not a capital valuation. The Solicitor-General had not said so. When he had interrupted, the hon. and learned Gentleman had very carefully and clearly avoided the point. He asked him now, whether he was willing to alter his Bill, so that it should be annual instead of capital value. The hon. and learned Gentleman was not willing. Why bring it forward then, and what application had it to his argument? In fact, it was one of those obvious red herrings which the Solicitor-General and his right hon. friend the Lord Advocate, were constantly dragging across the trail of the Bill the moment they were in a difficulty. In regard to assessments, the hon. Member had read a very interesting extract which only corroborated nearly half a dozen extracts which he had read last year. And he would remind the House that in their discussions in Grand Committee last year it was very clearly borne in upon the Lord Advocate that some kind of directions ought to appear in the Bill as to the manner in which these assessments were to be made; in point of fact, there ought to be a schedule attached to the Bill, fully instructing the assessors in their duties. Why had that schedule not been put in? For the very best of reasons. It ran up against another insuperable difficulty, and they passed on and left it alone. This Bill did not deal with very important interests—in Scotland—with fisheries, for example, and with the minerals of an estate. Let them take the case of a river. The bed of it belonged to one owner, say the Crown; the fishery belonged to someone else. How was the bed of the river to be valued? The Bill did not say, the assessor did not know. It was hardly to be expected that the owner of the soil should pay for a fishery which did not belong to him. In regard to minerals the same thing arose. They found all these difficulties in the typical counties which his hon. friend had selected. They would find them still better illustrated in the county of Perth and other county areas, where they would have these fishery questions to deal with, and where they would very properly show the true value of the Bill. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, who were pressing the Bill, had come to realise that there were far more difficulties and far greater anomalies than was thought attending this valuation and the resultant taxation upon it. He did not see quite the same ardour in defending the principles of this Bill and its ultimate use as was shown last year. His opinion was that the bottom had been knocked out of it. He supported the Amendment. He thought they ought to restrict this valuation in Scotland until they saw the results of the short tests in the particular county and in the city of Glasgow. If the Lord Advocate showed himself of a pliable disposition and accepted this Amendment he would be happy to move the addition of the other two areas, in order to see what was the effect of this valuation in four districts of Scotland which might be regarded as typical.

*Mr. WOOD (Glasgow, St. Rollox) said that the hon. Member for Londonderry in proposing the Amendment had given as his reason for suggesting that the city of Glasgow had changed its mind with regard to the taxation of land values, the fact that the Corporation had asked that the cost of the valuation should be borne out of national funds. That was a very inadequate reason. It was very easy to get a resolution of that kind on any subject from any local authority. At least that was his experience of local authorities. Perhaps some alarm had been caused by the enormous figures which his hon. friend the Member for Dulwich had produced with regard to valuation in Glasgow; because he had said, quoting Dr. Murray, that it would cost £500,000 to value the land of Glasgow. Against that estimate they had Dr. Murray's own opinion that the total annual value of the land in Glasgow was only £570,000. The cost of valuation, therefore, would be very nearly the total annual value of the land. Dr. Murray was a gentleman of very great ability as a solicitor, and he had doubtless had many dealings with land, but he was not a skilled valuer. There was another witness before the Committee, a skilled valuer.

Mr. YOUNGER: Mr. Henry was not a skilled valuer.

*Mr. WOOD said that the gentleman might not be a professional valuer, but he had enormous experience in valuation, and he did not think his hon. friend would question his competence. He had been assessor in the city of Glasgow for so many years that he thought no one was able to form a better opinion on the subject. But they had a skilled valuer before them in the person of an official of the London County Council, who was a professional valuer, and a Fellow of the Surveyors' Institute. ["Name?"] It was Mr. Harper, who had great experience in valuation in connection with the London County Council. Of course, the evidence given before the Committee showed how necessary it was to get a valuation before attempting to deal with this problem. It was cautious and prudent on the part of the Committee to recommend that course, because the assessor of the city of Glasgow had given a very different estimate of the value of land in Glasgow from that given by Dr. Murray, for he had put the value at over £2,400,000. He thought that this, coming from a skilled valuer, was much nearer the true estimate than the former one, which put the value of the land in Glasgow at one-tenth of the annual value of the property. He thought the House would see that the latter was an absurd valuation on the face of it. But to come to the hon. Member for Preston, who had seconded this Amendment. The House always heard his speeches with delight, and it was a little hard that he should have tried to repress manifestations of appreciation which had come from the benches on his own side of the House. On each occasion the hon. Member addressed the House he had a new paradox to unfold; but his paradoxes were not always in the same spirit, for the paradox of this week might not be consistent with the paradox of last week. A good deal of what the hon. Gentleman had said was manifestly inconsistent with the evidence which he had given before the Select Committee. The hon. Member had said something about unearned increment, and he had previously told the Committee that the most extraordinary example of unearned increment in this country was not the unearned increment of the land, but the increase in the wages of the agricultural labourer since the abolition of the Corn Laws. That was an illustration of the extraordinary view the hon. Member took on the subject of the land. The hon. Gentleman went on to give London as an illustration. The hon. Member's information was three years old, and his figures, therefore, inaccurate. He told them that the London County Council had bought 220 acres of land, and had only built on five acres. When the London County Council bought the land, they took it with the intention of building gradually upon it as the houses became occupied, and the area was gradually being covered.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): The London County Council intended to build on the whole of the land within the first two or three years. I was on the Council at the time.

*MR. WOOD said his hon. friend seemed to know more than he did, but the fact of the matter was there had been some delay in dealing with the urban district council as regards drainage, and they had not commenced at once. But the development of an estate like that must be slow, and hon. Members were giving him one of the strongest points he could have. What was the reason they could not develop the estate more rapidly? The reason was not that they could not get people who would pay a rent that would return interest on the building expenditure, but that on the top of that they had a tax on the buildings of a third to a half of the annual interest required on the expenditure, and it was that last straw which arrested the development of these housing schemes. The hon. Member for Preston had raised the point that they could not value land apart from buildings. That fallacy had been exploded before the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

*MR. HAROLD COX: I did not say you could not value land apart from buildings; I said you could not make the valuation required by this Bill.

*MR. WOOD: I think the hon. Member said that the valuation of land apart from buildings was a metaphysical subtlety.

*MR. HAROLD COX: I said the description given in this Bill was a metaphysical abstraction.

*MR. WOOD said that the possibility of valuing land apart from buildings was a subject which they need not discuss now, however, because it was already done under the authority of an Act of Parliament. This was a matter which was very thoroughly considered in another place a few years ago in relation to the subject of betterment. Provision was made that land which was the subject of betterment should be valued apart from the building before the improvement was carried out; and then, some years after the improvement had been completed, should be valued again apart from the building so that they should know what the improvements had really added to the value of the land. With regard to the question which the hon. Member for Preston had very gratuitously raised as to the pledges they were alleged to have given at the last election, the hon. Member seemed to know a great deal about those pledges, but he was singularly misinformed in some cases. He (Mr. Wood) had given no pledges such as the hon. Member had described, though he had pointed out that the present system of rating was unsatisfactory and indefensible. Nothing in that debate had struck him so much as the fact that nobody on the other side, nor the hon. Member for Preston, had ventured in the least to defend the present system of rating.

MR. YOUNGER: I did. I distinctly stated that the present system was much better.

*THE CHAIRMAN: May I suggest that hon. Members do not interrupt so much.

*MR. WOOD said that statement had not been supported by argument. His point was that the present system of rating was indefensible on several grounds. First of all, it produced a condition of affairs in which it was extremely difficult either for private persons or for municipalities to build enough houses. Surely it was obvious that if they put a tax on any kind of industry they discouraged it, and it was a most singular thing that in this country they should have chosen the building industry for their chief discouragement. The heavy rating of buildings and fixed machinery was a burden upon manufacture and commerce. He did not dwell on the fact that the discouragement of the building industry was one of the causes of lack of employment. One of the most serious faults of the existing system was its effect upon housing. In London there were nearly threequarters of a million people living under overcrowded conditions—more than two in one room. In Glasgow, there were 368,000. It was admitted that the condition was aggravated (and he had given an instance in the case of the housing scheme which his hon. friend had referred to) by the fact that if they wanted to build they had to provide for a rate of from a third to a half on the annual return they got on the expenditure for building, and that absolutely discouraged building. Municipal authorities were spending large sums of money very profitably with the object of providing tramway facilities in order to make the population mobile, to carry them from the overcrowded centres to the outskirts where there was more room and air to be obtained, but that was all handicapped by the vicious system of rating. If they were to deal with that they must deal with it outside as well as inside the urban area concerned. It was of no use to deal with it inside areas like Glasgow or London alone. They must deal with it on the outskirts where land was cheap and the poorer classes of the community could obtain houses at rents within their means. The hon. Member for Preston had declared that the effect of this proposal would be to relieve the wealthy merchant who lived in a suburban villa and to put a new burden upon the poor shopkeeper in the centre. In the first place, the hon. Member's picture of the suburbs was a fancy picture. There were undoubtedly villas and wealthy merchants in the outskirts of London, but there were also vast areas which were dormitories of the poor—West Ham, East Ham, and Walthamstow—and in all these places they would reduce the cost of housing, and it would be an inestimable benefit to the people of London.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to confine himself at any rate to Scotland.

*MR. WOOD said that exactly the same remarks would apply to Scotland. Whether it was true or false the hon. Member's argument was absolutely inconsistent with the evidence he had given before the Select Committee. He had said it was his opinion that the effect of rating was to lower the rent which the landlord received, but he had qualified that statement by saying that in many cases the landlord did not exact the full amount he might obtain. He (Mr. Wood) put the question to him very carefully, whether he held the opinion that the ultimate incidence of the rates, speaking generally, was upon the landlord, and he replied that he did. What then came of his argument about coming on the poor ratepayer and relieving the wealthy landlord? It was absolutely inconsistent.

MR. HAROLD COX: I think my hon. friend has forgotten the existence of leases.

*MR. WOOD said he had not forgotten the existence of leases. Nobody was proposing, though the hon. Member seemed to think so, by that Bill to shift the whole incidence of the rates from the buildings to the land at a single operation. Where did he find that in the Bill?

MR. HAROLD COX: The Solicitor-General's speech.

*MR. WOOD said the Solicitor-General had explained what he hoped would ultimately come from the Bill. He had never heard him say they should do it all at a single operation. All this discussion about leaseholds and feus and ground rents was perfectly irrelevant, and there was nothing to prejudice that question in this Bill. He was a member of the Select Committee and knew what view they took. They had thrown out the Bill which was before them largely on the ground that it only dealt with urban areas, though Members opposite were of course opposed to the whole principle. There was one witness who said that the land value of Glasgow was £570,000 a year, and another who said it was £2,400,000. Of course it was absurd to take Glasgow alone or Lanarkshire, the richest part of Scotland. They got no adequate information of the balance of advantage in different parts of Scotland. Surely, if Members wanted justice to be done whenever a Rating Bill was introduced, they wanted full information; and information about Glasgow, though favourable enough to the contention of those who agreed with the principle, might be unfair information and might lead them to do things which were too drastic perhaps in regard to other localities. He maintained that the advantage was not limited to the big towns, but extended to rural districts. They had constant complaints that the landlord spent so much money on his buildings and his improvements that he got no adequate return from the land. This reform would relieve him in the rating on buildings and improvements. They had complaints that there was overcrowding, not only in the big towns but in rural areas, and that it was impossible to build cottages and get a return that was worth speaking of. The second objection was that it would cause the intensifying of the congestion in the centre of towns and the erection of sky-scrapers. Nobody had ever shown or would be able to show that the cheapening of building and the widening of the area of building land could ever tend to make people crowd more into a particular area or have any other effect than that of spreading the population in a satisfactory manner, conducive to the health and morals of the community. The fact of the matter was that that was an entirely new argument which would not bear a moment's examination. The hon. Member himself had a remedy which he had given before the Select Committee. It was to put the rates on all kinds of income.

*THE CHAIRMAN: This question is really entirely outside even the Bill, although it would be relevant to the Second Reading, because you can discuss alternatives at that stage. But it is entirely outside the Amendment, which is whether the Bill should apply to certain parts or to the whole of Scotland.

*MR. WOOD said he was sorry he was not able to reply to some of the remarks of his hon. friend the Member for Preston. He submitted that under the circumstances no case whatever had been made out for confining the application of the Bill to Glasgow and Lanarkshire, or even to Alloa and Perthshire. What they honestly desired to obtain in the Select Committee was the proposal the Government had adopted, that in dealing with this question they should take the preliminary step of obtaining an accurate valuation of the land, which would enable them to consider the reform of rating and to change the basis of rating, perhaps gradually, but ultimately, from the composite subject of land, buildings and improvements to the single and much more satisfactory subject of the land.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) suggested that it would be much better to allow the Bill to apply to the whole of Scotland, because local option would not work well inasmuch as some classes of cases might not be obtained at all. With regard to cost, the hon. Member's case was a good one, but he did not think that the Government had shown themselves hostile to it. By adding this column they would collect an immense amount of information and statistics. He had never known a Bill before which was likely to be subjected to so severe a test as this Bill, because it would have to run the gauntlet of every assessor in Scotland. Opinions differed as to what the cost of this charge would be, but they should remember that in the Report on the incidence of local taxation strong opinions were expressed that valuations of this nature could be made without any very great difficulty in urban areas. Even in some of the mining districts he did not think there would be very great difficulty in filling up the valuation roll, and there would be no difficulty in applying the scheme later on. It had been urged that the scheme should have accompanied the Bill. There were great difficulties in regard to local taxation, but they had to choose between the *status quo* and an increase in the taxation upon what was called the unearned increment on building values. Most of them were not satisfied with the *status quo*, and it would never be tolerated that land bearing a large value should remain immune from local taxation so long as it was not built upon. They would never solve the housing problem until the populous communities owned the sites outside the towns. He had always been in favour of building values in the future going to the community. A change in the incidence of taxation was necessary, and if they were going to depart from the *status quo* they must have a valuation of this kind. They might found upon this new column a veryfoolish scheme or a very moderate or wise one, which was not always the same thing, but whatever kind of scheme they adopted they would require a valuation of this kind—even to carry out Lord Balfour of Burleigh's scheme. By putting upon the local assessment authorities, subject to the payment of a fair proportion of the expense by the State, the duty of filling up this new column they would get an immense amount of information which would be very valuable. He had sat upon a great many of these inquiries, but his mind did not carry him much further than the Minority Report of Lord Balfour. He did not accept the finding of the last Committee as involving the scheme which might be the result of this Bill. In some ways he went beyond that proposal, and in others against it, but he could conceive nothing but good coming out of this inquiry. A doubt was cast upon what the Solicitor-General had said as to the rating of crofter holdings.

MR. YOUNGER: The valuation, not the rating.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said that in forming a valuation roll there were crofts in which the land and the fixtures were rated, and on which they were not rated at all. He knew of one crofter holding a farm where the original rent of the land was £12 10s. It was let for £10. There were £200 worth of fixtures upon it, but the entire holding was only rated on £10. He did not think there would be any great lawyers' expenses about this Bill, and he was quite sure that any well-organised estate would be able to furnish a very fair return. In some cases there would be litigation, and the only case in which there would be difficulty would be in regard to land surrounding populous centres where there would be imposed the task of deciding what proportion of a building area should be subject to the rate. Just as he thought agricultural land was overrated now, so he beleived that urban land was underrated, and it was by submitting all these points to the assessors and the assessment authorities that they would be able some day to formulate a better scheme than had yet been put before the country by the very numerous inquiries they had had during the last thirty-five years. They ought not to have any unnecessary delay in this matter, and although his hon. friend had made a reasonable proposal he thought it was one which would involve some delay. He would include all Scotland in order to get the fullest information, because that would tend to secure that there would be no further delay in readjusting the incidence of taxation in Scotland.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) congratulated the hon. Member for Preston upon his excellent speech. The arguments he had laid down were unanswerable. One of the reasons given by the hon. Member in support of his Amendment was that he wished to rescue his hon. friends from breaking their pledges, but that did not concern him so much, because he did not care if they broke all their pledges. All the hon. Member's other arguments appealed to him with very great force. The speech delivered by the hon. Member for Leith Burghs seemed to him to be one in favour of the Amendment, because he argued that there should be an inquiry and that the more information they had the better. As a matter of fact, they could get sufficient information from Glasgow and Lanarkshire; therfore, why should they put the rest of Scotland to the expense of obtaining this information? He had always understood that one of the greatest attributes of the Scotch mind was economy. If they could get the information by confining the inquiry to Lanarkshire and Glasgow, why extend it to the whole of Scotland? The hon. Member for St. Rollox had given as a reason that there was overcrowding in the agricultural districts, and that the landlords complained that they could not build houses because the rates were so high. But the rates had nothing to do with it. The cost of cottages was about £400, which at 3s. a week would produce £7 10s. per annum, or under 2 per cent. They must get interest for their capital, and if the return was not sufficient to pay an adequate rate of interest, the question of the rates did not come in at all. With regard to unoccupied land, the hon. Member thought something would have to be done and that some measure ought to be brought in to deal with it. The common idea was that this land was being withheld from the market, and that, if this Bill were applied to the whole of Scotland, the unreasonable landlords would devote the land to buildings. That argument was advanced by the hon. Member for the St. Rollox division of Glasgow. Was that the example of the London County Council? The County Council held land which they would not sell, because the revenue would not give a sufficient return for the money they had spent. That was what the landlord was doing. The County Council was no better than other landlords. Land was withheld because the landlords could not get a sufficient price, and the object of hon. Gentlemen opposite was to force them to part with the land whether they could get a good price or not. Even a Radical County Council would not agree to that doctrine being applied to themselves. Then there came the question of the cost of the valuation. He had no enmity against the city of Glasgow; he had no doubt that it was a very excellent place. Though he was going to vote for the Amendment he could not help feeling a little regret, because he was rather sorry that he would compel, if the Amendment were carried, the worthy citizens of Glasgow to put their hands deeply into their own pockets. He thought at first that he should not be justified in doing so; but he afterwards came to the conclusion that he should be justified because it was in Glasgow that the demand for this Bill originally arose. Now he was told that when they found they would not be able to break existing contracts, that demand rather vanished, and they thought it would not be wise to put their hands into their own pockets merely for the purpose of obtaining information, but they desired to put their hands into the Imperial Exchequer [An Hon. Member: That is the Scottish mind.] He did not approve of the Scottish mind when they desired to put their hands into his pocket, and as he was a contributor to the Imperial Exchequer he felt that if the city of Glasgow had the effrontery to say that if England was to subscribe to what he and his friends considered a wild-cat scheme, it was only right and just that Glasgow should be chastised slightly by having the Bill confined to their own area. When the hon. Member for St. Rollox referred to the cost of the valuation, he presumed the assessor's charges were meant. But there were other charges. How about the cost of appeals? Appeals would have to be made, and then there would be lawyers, refreshers, and 500-guinea briefs. These charges would have nothing to do with the annual value. Counsel did not say: "I am only going to charge so much because the annual value is so and so." He charged according to the number of people who wanted him. If the Solicitor-General for Scotland was put down alone on a moor and valued at his prairie value, it would not be much. But if this Bill were passed there would be a great many people would be competing for him, and his fee would have nothing whatever to do with the value of the land in question. The hon. Member for St. Rollox division had had some experience of the London County Council, and he would ask him whether it was not the fact that some attempt at the valuation of sites had been made, and that it was abandoned because the cost was so great. The Amendment would limit the expenditure to the county of Lanark and the burgh of Glasgow, and it would not prevent the information being obtained if the information was valuable. They were all spending too much money, and he thought that they might show the country on this occasion that they desired to be business-like and economical.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire) said he had listened with interest and amazement to some of the speeches made by hon. Members opposite. The mover of the Amendment spoke as though the supporters of the Bill had found a gold mine in this matter. He had never had any idea of the kind. What he and his friends desired was a new and improved method of valuation which, instead of preventing the development of land, would promote its development. The hon. Member for Preston had asked a number of questions and had founded a great deal of his criticism on the different valuations which might be put on land. If his hon. friend had read the Bill carefully he would have seen that there was no mention of agricultural value. The one thing to be considered was the market value—the amount which the land would fetch. The hon. Member took the case of an unnamed Scottish town which was surrounded by 600 acres of land which would gradually be brought into the market; he supposed part of that land was fetching in the market about £1,000 per acre, and he asked how they were going to value the remainder. Marvellous problem! He could assure his hon. friend that if he would go to the landlord and ask how much he would let him have the other acres for, the landlord would place a reserve price upon it. When a reserve price was placed upon it, there would be very little difficulty in finding the market value. The hon. Member gave away his case when he said that they could not estimate the value of land apart from buildings. The exemptions made both in the House and upstairs were made in order to meet the desires of hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. He would like to point out that the value of the land which was to be ascertained was not the value before the improvements were made. If they went back hundreds of years he supposed they would come to a time when there were no people, but merely mammals and bears. In what his hon. friend called pre-historic times he supposed the land of Glasgow would not be worth eighteenpence. There was nobody then who would have given eighteenpence for it. The value contemplated by this Bill was not the value in bygone days and under different conditions; it was the actual value in the market if sold under the conditions specified in the Bill. His hon. friend the Member for the Ayr Burghs advised them to proceed cautiously. He appreciated that advice, but he would like to point out to his hon. friend that in the Report of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, which he understood him to follow——

MR. YOUNGER: I do not altogether follow it.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE said that Lord Balfour's proposal was to couple valuation with rating. They were now proceeding with far greater caution. They said they did not wish to touch rating in this valuation as giving the necessary data. He congratulated the hon. Member for the Ayr Burghs on having come to the rescue of the hon. Member for Preston when he was in difficulty over the question of rating in the crofting counties. The crofter was rated on his rent, which was fixed by the Crofters Commission. In fixing the rent the Commission did not take into consideration any of the improvements made by the crofter or his predecessor in the same holding, and therefore they were exempt from rating. That was, he thought, a very strong point in favour of the present proposal. The hon. Member for the Ayr Burghs stated that under the Crofters Act rating was on the basis of annual value, it was now proposed to put it on the basis of capital value. The two bases were not so very distinct, because it was common to estimate the purchase price at so many years annual value or rent. Some time back he was in favour of taking the annual value as the basis, but further study of the subject had led him to adopt the view that the capital value ought to be the basis. If they supposed that the landed property was held from year to year, then the value of that property for rating purposes in great cities would be practically *nil*, because no one would build on land which was held for only a year. It would be different in the case of a lease of ten years or ninety-nine years, or a feu. He thought the Government had, therefore, done a very wise thing in going back to the old simple plan of capital value. They could always get a true basis of value if they charged it at so many years purchase. It was remarkable that no hon. Member had had a word to say in favour of the present system of valuation in Scotland, which worked very badly. How did the present system work? Suppose land that should be used was not used, it went practically rate-free. They did not rate the possession of land but the use of it. If a man built on or developed the land in any way, on every improvement up went the assessment and on went the rates. This Bill was purely a valuation Bill, but he frankly admitted that they should do what they could to shift the rates from the present basis to the market value of the land, and to let all improvements go tax-free. In the towns whole streets of houses were put up, and one-third of the revenue derived from the houses went in rates. The result was that house property was unremunerative; and that building was checked because people would not put their capital into it. Not only that, but there was enormous difficulty in obtaining land. The same problem faced them in all the towns and counties of Scotland; and a reform was needed, not only to secure better houses and better buildings in town and country, but to revive Scottish agriculture. They would never succeed in overtaking the over-pressure of population in the towns until the country was opened up to enable the people to go out on to the land. The hon. Member for Preston himself admitted that when he said that if the principles embodied in the Bill were extended to the country——

MR. J. M. HENDERSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked if the hon. Member was in order in going into the whole question of rating.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said that the Amendment only dealt with a specific locality, and the hon. Member could not range over the whole of Scotland upon the question of rating.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE said he was only anxious to point out the effect of the Bill on the country districts. As he had said, they wanted to relieve the over-pressure of population in the towns by opening up the country districts as far as they could. It was in the recollection of hon. Members that the other day the Government purchased the large estate of Inverleiver in Scotland, extending to 12,500 acres, for £25,000, which he regarded as a very fair price. That estate was bought for the purpose of afforestation which had been advocated for years by hon. Members on both sides of the House. The estate was valued at present for rating purposes at £1,100 a year. But he would point out that provision had been specially made in the Bill to cover such a case, for woods were to be exempt from the operation of the Bill.

*MR. YOUNGER said there were surely woods in Lanarkshire.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Member was travelling beyond the Amendment which was restricted to a certain area. That was the only question before the Committee.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE ventured to suggest that there was relevance in what he had said. If the Amendment was carried the estate of Inverleiver would be rated at so much; but if the Bill passed as it stood the new trees would not be taxed and the estate would reap the advantage. The Secretary for Scotland had recently stated that in Glasgow more than 54 per cent. of the population lived under overcrowded conditions, or 2,000 on one acre; and if the Bill passed land in the neighbourhood of Glasgow would be set free for building, and the terrible overcrowding in the city would be relieved. In the case of Greenock, the overcrowding was even worse than in Glasgow. There was plenty of room outside the town for an extension of building, but that land could not be obtained at anything like a reasonable price. There was the same difficulty in every urban district, including Glasgow. It so happened that some of that land was wanted only a few months ago for the purposes of national defence. The property just outside Greenock consisted of forty-eight acres, and was entered in the assessor's roll at the annual value of £75. The Admiralty required ten of these acres, the proportional rating valuation of which would be between £15 and £20. When the Admiralty came to purchase these ten acres they had to pay for them £27,225, or at the rate of very nearly 2,000 years purchase. He maintained that if the Amendment were carried the Bill would lose its chief effect. What they wanted was that the land should be rated at its capital market value, and that when taken compulsorily it should be acquired on that basis. The Prime Minister, speaking in October last at Dumfermline, said—

> "Our present rating system operates as a hostile tariff on our industries; it goes in restraint of trade. It falls with severity on the shoulders of the poorer classes in the very worst shape, and in the shape of a tax upon house-room."

The Bill would have the effect of removing that hostile tariff. It would, moreover, do a great deal to improve the farmhouses of the country and to open up new possibilities in Scotland. He hoped nothing would be done to cut the Bill down, as it would prove the foundation of a new and improved system of rating in Scotland, which would develop the natural resources of the country and open up better opportunities for the people.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said that the speech of the hon. Gentleman had travelled somewhat widely from the subject of the Amendment, to the exact terms of which he preferred to confine himself. There were, however, one or two points in the hon. Gentleman's remarks which he must touch upon. The last observation which fell from the hon. Member was to the effect that he resisted the Amendment on the ground that, if carried, it would render the Bill nugatory—it would wreck the Bill. He understood the hon. Gentleman to say that any limitation of the Bill would be vital and strike at its root. If that was the opinion of the hon. Gentleman it was not an opinion shared by the Prime Minister, because the right hon. Gentleman in his correspondence with Lord Balfour of Burleigh observed that the question of the extension or non-extension of the Bill to rural districts was a matter of detail, and that important as those points of detail might be they in no way affected the vital principle of the Bill.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE said that the hon. Member for North-West Lanark had put words into his mouth which he had never used. He had never said that the effect of the Amendment would be to render the Bill nugatory. What he did say was that if they restricted the scope of the Bill they would very largely lessen its usefulness.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said he did not want to carry on any controversy with the hon. Member, and, of course if he had misrepresented anything the hon. Gentleman had said he at once withdrew it. To those statements his hon. friend would at all events allow him to adhere. The hon. Member had made a very interesting confession, that he never thought that these proposals for the taxation of land values were going to provide an Eldorado, or to open up any new sources of revenue, but he had always proposed this policy, not for the purpose of raising revenue, but for changing the system of land values. But that was not the system which was before those who brought forward this Bill. The hon. Member who brought forward the original Land Values Bill of 1906, the hon. Member for Elgin Burghs, said that his proposal for the taxation of land values was for the purpose of meeting the needs of the municipalities, not created by extravagance, but imposed upon them by the growing necessities of the case, and to raise the standard of comfort and education, the cost of which had increased, was increasing, and was likely to increase, by discovering new sources of revenue. That was the view of the hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, and the Lord Advocate in a speech which he made later in the debate expressed the opinion that there was to be found in this direction a new and not improper source of revenue and taxation. The Lord Advocate was quite entitled to hold that opinion, but he would merely point out to him that this was not the opinion of hon. Gentlemen who sat behind him, and that that was not the intention of the Report of the Select Committee. With regard to the Amendment he confessed he felt himself in a certain amount of difficulty, because he agreed generally with the proposal his hon. friend had made as regarded limiting in some way the area, and by limiting the area to limit the cost of what was confessedly, if they adopted this Bill, a fishing inquiry. This was distinctly an experimental Bill, and the hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench said that he proposed it to get information. His hon. friend then said: "Why not get your information from typical areas," if it was only information which they wanted. He agreed with that proposal in regard to the question of expense. The hon. Member for St. Rollox had made some mention of a witness before a Committee, who gave an estimate of something more than half per cent. on the valuation of Glasgow as the cost of that valuation. The hon. Member said that that was excessive, but he (Mr. Mitchell-Thomson) did not think so; he did not think they would find any valuator or assessor, accustomed to make valuations, who would put the figure at less than one half per cent. He agreed with the proposer of the Amendment on the first ground of expense, and, in the second place, that those who were to do this work were men to whom it would be outside their practice and profession. Those who would have to carry out the work were not valuers in the sense in which they would have to be under this Bill; they were not lawyers, and yet in some sense they would have to have a knowledge of the law. As his hon. friend the Member for Ayr Burghs had pointed out, the opinion of assessors from all parts of Scotland had been given in no unmeasured terms as to the practicability of the precise proposals put forward in the Bill. When they went further and inquired into the wishes of representative bodies in Scotland, he thought they had very strong ground indeed for supporting some such Amendment as this. An opportunity of securing the opinions of those bodies occurred last summer, when a body calling itself, he thought, the United Committee of the Leagues for Taxing Land Values, sent round a circular to various local bodies representing the authorities in Scotland, asking whether they would be prepared to promote a petition in favour of the Bill. This Committee or whatever it was did not meet with that encouraging reception from the local authorities in Scotland which the statements of Ministers, and of those who had addressed audiences in England with regard to the state of feeling in Scotland, would have led one to believe. They applied to a large number of local authorities in Scotland, but they did not do so apparently in some counties, including Banff, Forfar, Haddington, Inverness, Montrose and Perth; at all events no letters were received in those places. They received a favourable reply from four local bodies in Scotland, the town councils of Glasgow, Dundee, and Galashiels, and the Wick parish council. Nineteen bodies, he thought, in Scotland, had received this communication and recommended that no action should be taken, including amongst the larger, Edinburgh, Ayr, Forfar, Dumfries, Hawick, Jedburgh, Lanark, and Linlithgow. An evangelist of the new gospel did not, therefore, meet with that honour in his own country which one might have expected to be justly his due, because not only did the town council refuse to express any opinion, but the parish council said that the proper place for the request of this Committee was under the Table.

MR. URE: It is outside my constituency.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said it was at all events in the same district. Coming back to the Amendment, while he was perfectly prepared to agree that there was much to be said in favour of recommending the valuation of one typical area, he could hardly agree to the proposed typical area which his hon. friend had recommended by his Amendment. If his hon. friend would be prepared to leave out Lanarkshire and insert Linlithgowshire, he would have much pleasure in supporting him; but if he went to a division with the Amendment in the precise form in which it stood he could hardly give him his support, because he, representing the county of Lanark, apart from the city of Glasgow, did not think that strong enough arguments had been brought to bear why those localities should be saddled with the expense of the inquiry—an expense which ought properly to be borne by the State, as the valuation was for Government purposes. If the Government would accept the proposal that this expenditure should be borne by the State he would support the Amendment. Then he would suggest to the hon. Member that considerable difficulty would arise in his own constituency with regard to legal questions. How did he suggest that subterranean valuation should be conducted? How did he suggest that land in which shale was supposed to lie or in which it did not lie should be valued? Speaking of shale, he might ask how it was to be valued in any case, as a place where it was would be a valuable and desirable building site. Was it to be valued on the basis that houses were going to be built on it? [AN HON MEMBER: Market value.] Did the hon. Gentleman understand what was meant by market value? He asked how they were going to value a bit of moor or land which had slag or shale on it, and the answer was that it was not going to be valued as a potential building site, but as a bit of land *qua* land. Not as land with a site for possible buildings in the future, but as land *qua* land. It was all very well for hon. Members to say that now, but that was not what they said at the General Election. He would remind hon. Members that in his speech at the Albert Hall the Prime Minister made some remarks with regard to the necessity of deriving some fresh revenue from the land. ["Hear, hear."] An hon. Member said "Hear, hear," but what happened? It was all very well to make remarks like that in the Albert Hall, which was not the centre of a large agricultural district, but that speech of the right hon. Gentleman caused considerable searching of hearts among many English county candidates. A letter was written to the right hon. Gentleman by a candidate for a division of Essex, and the reply was published. The Prime Minister said that he was asked whether or not what he said in reference to deriving money from land in the shape of revenue, was to be read as a declaration that the rating or valuation to be taxed fell or not under the general valuation of land *per se*. His answer was "most assuredly," and if there was any longer any doubt in the minds of the writer's friends the right hon. Gentleman hoped it would be put right. He commended that letter to hon. Members opposite.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme) said the discussion had wandered rather far from the Amendment before the House, but at the same time he would point out that the speech of the hon. Member who seconded it was also somewhat wide of the mark, and he hoped that they might find themselves within the bounds of order when they were dealing with that speech. The hon. Member was not in his place, but he thought it would be useful to deal, first of all, with the question of the practical difficulty of this valuation. The hon. Member had quoted a letter—a humourous letter from a Scotch assessor, in which the practicability of the valuation was referred to. He had a letter from a valuer in North Staffordshire, in which he explained the scheme of valuation adopted in the towns of North Staffordshire. He had written to this gentleman asking him whether the basis of rent was valuation, and that gentleman wrote back as follows—

"The method adopted is carefully to measure all buildings and from this to calculate the cubic capacity in feet. Each is then valued at so much per foot according to valuer's estimate, 2¾d.–9d., according to character. This is then added to the value of the land occupied by such building and surrounding same, which is estimated separately, at so much per square yard, according to use, position, etc. This gives the valuer the estimated capital value, which he translates into gross annual value."

That was to say, the cubic capacity of the building was worked out, and the cost calculated for that cubic capacity. To this was added the value of the land estimated separately at so much per square yard, according to use and position. That gave the capital value from which the annual value of land and buildings was calculated. They had, therefore, in North Staffordshire a system of valuation which already involved the separate valuation of land. It was carried out automatically, without any expense, as part of the existing system. As the House was aware, methods of valuation differed in different localities, but here was a case in a locality taken purely by accident where the valuation involved the separate valuation of the market value of the land. It had been said that there was not merely the cost of valuation, but that the number of appeals would enormously enhance the expense to the community. He would take an instance from Germany. Mr. Horsfall, who was well known to Members of the House, had examined the question carefully, and he said that in Cologne under the old system —that was when the annual value was taken—there were in one year 2,703 appeals against 21,000 assessments. Under the new system of rating on selling value there were only 174 appeals against 30,000 assessments, an enormous reduction due to the fact that the selling value was taken instead of a more or less arbitrary annual value. Indeed, this was the natural result. He had had a good deal of valuation to do when in the Transvaal, where they valued land and buildings at their capital value, and his experience was that when the selling value was the basis there were few objections to high valuation. People liked to see their properties stand high in the rate books, as it was naturally the figure on which mortgages and sales of property were based. The minority Report of the Royal Commission recommended that if the owner of the land considered the valuation excessive he should be entitled to require the local authority to take it over at a fixed number of years valuation. He thought himself it would be only fair to give some ultimate appeal of that nature. The hon. Member for Preston had said it must be remembered that persons were taxed and not things, his meaning being that it did not matter whether the rates were based on the complete value of land and buildings, or on land alone. That, surely, was a rather strange argument for a free trader. If persons, not things, paid taxes, the foreigner paid the taxes on corn, or the importer, or whoever handed over the cheque, and it did not matter whether they taxed diamonds or pork. The case for free trade was that the matter to be considered was not who paid the tax in the first instance, but on whose shoulders the burden would ultimately rest. On the question of the incidence of rates he would quote Professor Sidgwick, who said that the portion of the tax corresponding to the value of the house as a product of industry must be paid by the occupier, except so far as he was a producer, and could shift it forward. Professor Sidgwick went on to say that the portion of the tax corresponding to the ground value would fall upon the owner of the land, who had no means of escaping it by raising the rent, which it must be assumed was as high as the necessity of letting would allow. The rates then were incident to a certain extent on the landlord, and partly on the occupier, and what he wanted was to make them wholly incident on the landlord and not on the occupier, who could pass the tax forward to the general public. How could this be said to be transferring the tax from the idle to the industrious?

MR. HAROLD COX: I was speaking of the immediate effect of this proposal.

MR. WEDGWOOD said that to neglect the ultimate effect of the tax and insist on its immediate effect was unworthy of one who had again and again stood up for free trade in that House. The hon. Member had said that what was wanted was not access to the land, but access to capital. Surely the way to cheapen capital was to take the tax off the houses and improvements. When they remembered that houses had to bear what was often a 50 per cent. tax, and any improvements in factories or machinery had to bear this crushing burden which was strangling industry all over the country, and that the proposal was to shift this burden off industry and capital, they could not be said to be refusing access to capital. This 50 per cent. tax was strangling industry all over the country; and when they asked the House to shift this burden on capital and transfer it elsewhere, they could not say they were refusing access to capital, because they were giving far greater access to capital and making possible a far more enormous development of industries.

Mr. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) said he rose for the purpose of urging the Lord Advocate to take into consideration one aspect of the question of expense. The hon. Member who moved the Amendment did so more particularly because the expense of the valuation of all Scotland would be so great. He did not agree with him. Lord Balfour's Minority Report demonstrated that the expense would not be so very great. He would point out, however, how unfair the hon. Member was to Glasgow and Lanarkshire. He was going to ask them to bear the expense of this experiment, which was to benefit the whole of Scotland. The hon. Member for Lanarkshire on his own side made it clear that they would object; and rightly so. If, as the Government said, this was a Valuation Bill, and not a Rating Bill, he thought it only fair that they should consider whether some part of the burden of expense in the interval before the rating authorities were allowed to rate for the object should be borne by the Treasury, and he hoped the Lord Advocate would be able to give them some assurance that the Government would look with favour on that proposal. The hon. Member for Preston had made a statement which he was quite sure when he heard it repeated he would hardly adhere to. He had said that the essence of the Bill was to change the whole basis of rating. The essence of the Bill was to do nothing of the kind. It was a Valuation Bill, a Bill to obtain information, and, when they had that information, they would decide what would be the basis of their rating. He (Mr. McCrae) absolutely agreed as to the economic soundness of the decision of the Committee upstairs and that the basis of rating ought to be changed. This Bill left it open for the House afterwards to determine whether the whole basis of rating should be changed, whether all taxation should be placed on the land, or whether, as he had always held, there ought to be a separate and supplemental rating put on land values, giving a diminution of general rating. The Bill was one to obtain information to enable Parliament to determine the method which ought to be followed; and he thought it was unfair to place the expense of the experiment on a particular area. He had always maintained that the information obtained would be valuable not only for local, but also for Imperial, purposes. They could never have a fair basis of Imperial taxation until they knew really what was the value of land. He therefore pleaded with his right hon. friend the Lord Advocate to see if he could not give them any assurance that the cost would be borne by the Treasury. He thought that would meet the objection of the hon. Members opposite, and he had no doubt his hon. friend would withdraw his Amendment on such an assurance being given.

Sir E. BOYLE (Taunton) said that the hon. Member for Newcastle had laid down a proposition to which they could not find much objection. He said: First of all, value the buildings, and then add the value of the land for the purpose for which the property is used.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I did not say that: "The total is then added to the value of the land occupied by such buildings and surrounding the same, which is estimated separately at so much per square yard according to use, position, etc."

Sir E. BOYLE: "According to use." That is my point, and it is right. Proceeding, the hon. Member said that, if they valued the land for a purpose for which it was not used, they would be doing a great injustice. He would give an instance. A man had a piece of land in the High Street and some years ago there was a cottage built upon it. The cottage was cubed out and came to £500. It rented at £30 per year, that was £5 for the land and 5 per cent. on the £500 for the cottage. That was fair. Nobody could take any exception to that. But if the land were valued for the purposes of a shop for which it was not used and £25 for a cottage for which it was used, then it would be assessed for something which they had no right to touch. The hon. Member conveyed his view to the letter. The thing should be assessed for the purpose for which it was used.

MR. WEDGWOOD said he was only reporting an example of how land and buildings were actually at present assessed separately. He by no means gave his approval to that particular method of valuing land or adding the two together. He merely gave an example of how it was done at present to show that it was not difficult to do.

SIR E. BOYLE thought the hon. Member, if he would read his speech, would see that he had correctly quoted him. If the owner could get possession of the property and pull the cottage down and put up a shop, they might assess it at what it was worth; but if he could not get possession and pull the cottage down, they could only, so long as the cottage stood, fairly assess the property at £30. That seemed to him an elementary principle of justice. A man should not pay for what he did not get. Supposing a cottage at a corner of a street was let at £50 a year on a nine years' lease, so long as that lease ran the freeholder could not get more than £50, and, although the property might be a suitable site for a bank or insurance company's offices, they could not assess it for those purposes till either a bank or some insurance offices had been erected. Otherwise they would be assessing not that which was, but that which might be, and that would be wrong. Somebody had gaily mentioned ½ per cent. as the cost. He had spent all his life in valuations of one sort or another, and the making of a ground plan of a property covered with buildings was no novice's work. There was not one in ten surveyors who could do it. If they were going to have a valuation worth the paper it was written upon, they must have a good man and pay him for doing it. They could get a valuation for next to nothing, but that would be just its value when they had got it. If they wanted a reliable valuation, which they could act upon, they must pay a fair and proper professional charge. It was not every man who could make the valuation required. It was a difficult task, and they would have to be careful or they would be giving it to a man who could not make even a preliminary survey. It was impossible for 1 per cent. to obtain a surveyor with the necessary skill, knowledge, and experience for the work.

MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince) said he had listened to the debates on the Bill during both last session and this session of Parliament. The Amendment proposed to limit the scope of the measure to Glasgow and the county of Lanark. The difficulties raised by the hon. Member who had just sat down cut dead at the Amendment. His observations were directly opposed to the Amendment, which he understood he rose to support. Most of the debates seemed to him to have been of a Second Reading character, and he had risen for the purpose of saying how completely they upon those benches were in agreement with the principle of the Bill. He was surprised that the proposal to divide Scotland in this way should have come from Scottish people themselves. In the Land Bill of the previous day English treatment had to be given to the Southern part of Scotland. Now Scotland had again to be divided, and the work of valuation must be undertaken only in Glasgow and in Lanarkshire and the other parts left alone. That seemed to him merely a counsel of delay. What, after all, was the whole spirit of the opposition to this measure? He remembered the vehement opposition of the Leader of the Opposition last session, and he noticed the attitude that his followers were taking even now. It was simply because they knew that behind the establishment of the valuation roll effect was to be given to a further principle. The little child declined to say A because if she did she would be requested to say B. The enormous values that were being created up and down the country by the labour, the skill, the brain and the general industry of the community must pay its fair share of taxation. They stood for that. They were thankful that the establishment of this principle came from Scotland. They had been thankful to Scotland for many good things in the past, and they believed that when the further principle was established in Scotland it would be a very good principle indeed and would be applicable to England. After all, why should not there be this valuation roll? What difficulty was there in it? A landowner who wished to sell his land had no difficulty in arriving at the value of it, and what greater difficulty could there be in a valuer arriving at it? There was a refusal price even for land covered with refuse heaps. It was worth something, but hitherto it had escaped the whole burden of local taxation. The principle in the Bill was a proper one, and if it could be applied in Glasgow and Lanarkshire it could with equal facility be applied throughout Scotland. In part the Amendment admitted the validity of the principle, and therefore, it was an Amendment of delay, and was clearly put forward for the purpose of barring the future progress of the Bill. They had had an alarming statement as to what the cost to Glasgow would be, quoted from a comparatively unknown man.

Mr. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): Dr. Murray is the best known solicitor in Glasgow.

Mr. WALSH said the best known solicitor in Glasgow was after all, a comparatively unknown man. They were speaking of great national interests and Dr. Murray was one out of 750,000 people in Glasgow. But when they brought forward these alarming figures that upon an annual land value of £570,000 it was going to cost £500,000, surely they could not expect to be taken seriously. Whatever it might be the principle was such a serious one, and it was so necessary to the advancement of Scotland and of the whole United Kingdom, that he heartily hoped every progressive Member in the House would vote against the Amendment.

Mr. THOMAS SHAW said he had listened to the whole debate, and he did not think it necessary to express any opinion on the view as to whether it had been conducted in the interests of delay. Under the Chairman's ruling they had ranged pretty widely. They had ranged considerably beyond Glasgow and Lanarkshire, the interesting town of Alloa, and the still more interesting county of Perthshire, and had apparently ranged into the theory and practice of all countries on the face of the world. As to the Amendment, the Government could not accept it. It would be to carry the principle of Scottish sub-division to an absurdity. They had a national system in existence, and the proposal of this Bill was to dovetail the new proposal into the national system. The suggestion of the Amendment was hardly within the bounds of reason. However, speeches had been made upon it, and very interesting speeches they had been. It was very remarkable to find that the first Amendment to a Scottish Valuation Bill was moved by an Irish Member, seconded by an English Member and supported by the Member for the City of London, substantially on the ground that he had never been to Glasgow himself. The language in which the Amendment was introduced was naturally the language of Ireland. The mover said he wished to limit the area of disturbance. They were not accustomed to that language in Scotland. Not many Members for Scotland would wish to limit the application of this valuation principle to one town only. Immediately on the hon. Member's right there sat an hon. Member who at once negatived the suggestion that Glasgow was entitled to a monopoly of all the good things that were going. "Relatively small" said his hon. friend. It was not relatively small. Its valuation was about a fourth part of the entire valuation of Scotland Glasgow and Lanarkshire combined had an annual valuation of nearly £9,000,000 sterling, and therefore it was, he granted, a substantial slice at all events that was going to be made. The mover however had said that opinion was changing with regard to this in Glasgow. He was afraid the same remark must apply to him as applied in a very notable degree to the seconder, that there was a slight lack of acquaintance with the condition of affairs in Scotland. Was his hon. friend aware that since last year's Bill, only six weeks or so ago the town council of Glasgow met and affirmed the principle of a separate valuation of land apart from improvements, by forty-five votes against twenty-four, and supported practically this Bill? The argument that opinion was changing was derived rather from imagination than from actual experience. As to broken pledges, they were far beyond the stage of going into personal issues of that kind. He did not know of any pledge that he had broken. The hon. Member for Preston had always done him the justice to say that from the first time that he had had to handle this Bill he had always made his position in regard to existing contracts absolutely plain, and he would also further do him the justice to say that both on that bench and on the bench opposite he had spoken as representing the whole bench. So that as far as the Government were concerned they maintained that this was a sound Bill, and so far from having gone back on their principles they maintained them to this hour. The hon. Member had said that it was proposed to shift the rates from the fabric to the site.

*MR. HAROLD COX: The Solicitor-General said so.

MR. THOMAS SHAW said that the Bill had nothing whatever to do with it any more than the Amendment. As his hon. friend had said, they must tax where they could get their money; the best avenue to get the money was to see where the wealth lay, and if it lay in the capital value of the land they would be doing his hon. friend and his principles a great service by substantially helping on towards that time when they would tax the people who could pay the money. The hon. Member then, leaving the Solicitor-General, came down upon his devoted head with a question as to the valuation of 590 acres, of which one acre had been sold at £1,000. He waited to hear whether the hon. Member would not answer himself on that point, and he did in the subsequent statement that one must take into account the prospect of a rise or the risk of a fall, and that that determined the present value. The hon. Member had astonished him by representing this as a subtlety. Not desiring to put Scotsmen on a pedestal, he would say that no man of any nationality would ever dream of this being a subtlety. It was a perfectly simple thing—as simple as A B C—but it was the A B C of valuation, and it completely disposed of the puzzle the hon. Member thought he was putting to him, otherwise he would have requested him to read the Bill, which said that the subject of valuation was to be valued at what it might be expected to realise if sold by a willing seller in an open market at the time of the valuation. That was not a subtlety. It did not mean that they were to wait years and centuries till they could get £3,000 an acre, but it meant what they could get for it now. That was the principle upon which all valuation in Scotland had been founded as long as he could remember. He had been engaged in many of those arbitrations and had had the highest skill on both sides before him, and the principle laid down had always been the principle which was being applied in this Bill.

*MR. HAROLD COX said his right hon. friend contended that the essence of the whole Bill was that the valuer was to take into account what would be the price which a willing seller would accept from a willing purchaser. If one acre had been sold for £1,000 might they not assume that the next acre would be valued at £1,000?

MR. THOMAS SHAW said his hon. friend thought that because one acre out of 600 fetched a certain figure all the rest must be valued at the same figure. That was quite out of the question.

*MR. HAROLD COX said the case he submitted was given to him by the owner of the land, who said that whenever he sold a single acre he could always get £1,000 for it.

MR. THOMAS SHAW said the word "whenever" begged the whole question. If there were purchasers ready to take the whole of the land to-morrow, would it be right to keep it at agricultural value, it being worth £1,000 an acre? He could now see where the hon. Member's difficulties were, and he would suggest to him a little further consideration.

The hon. Member had advanced in his views and changed them not once but more than once, and his views were now in a state of flux and transition. He suggested that a little further study would bring the hon. Member to the point of understanding what market value was, and the moment he did that he would approve of this Bill. The hon. Member having left him in that terrible dilemma turned next to his hon. friend the Solicitor-General and said he had given a wrong illustration in regard to the crofter. He said he had appealed to the Crofters Acts and the Crofter Commission Report, and he found that the crofters' rent was assessed upon the footing of the value of the land plus the improvements done by the landlord. By that he conceded that it was not assessed upon the footing either of the improvements made by the crofter himself or by any of his predecessors in title. That was the disadvantage of not understanding the Scottish system. The whole discussion had ranged round the proposition that the crofter, and the crofter alone, did all his improvements, and that the improvements done by the landlord constituted the merest fraction. The Solicitor-General, in the statement which had been criticised by the hon. Member for Preston, was referring to the almost universal practice that the crofters had not done their own improvements, were not rented upon them, and were not rated upon them either. That was a case where the value of the land minus the improvements was actually subject to rating. The hon. Member read the dictum of some experienced assessor to the effect that the value which the Bill desired to ascertain was a metaphysical abstraction, and they could not get at it. Lord Camperdown also had spoken in the country of the wide definition of improvements as rendering the thing metaphysical and unpractical. The original limit respecting improvements in the Bill was altered as the result of negotiations in the House of Commons by which he and the House were bound; but if Lord Camperdown's views prevailed, and the original limit were restored with consent, he would not be disposed to resist. But with regard to the experienced assessor, he wondered whether he gave evidence; because one who did give evidence, and alleged the metaphysical abstraction which could not be valued, was asked by the chairman of the committee whether he would surrender his appointment if the duty of finding the value was put upon him, and he replied: "Certainly not, I would do my duty." "How would you do it?" said the chairman; and then he proceeded to tell the committee quite correctly the way it could be done. The *status quo*, it was admitted, was intolerable. Instances arose where they did not find any failure to put a price on the land on account of the metaphysical abstraction. The price was promptly put on the land when it was wanted for public purposes. Capital value must be ascertained in order to avoid the persistent yearly misrepresentation of the true valuation. He would take three methods, all of which had been mentioned in the debate. There was one method very radical, perhaps too radical at least to begin with—the method of substituting a rate upon the land for the present composite rate upon land and buildings. For that purpose a valuation was absolutely necessary. The second method was that of rating upon land values a certain *quota* so as to assist taxation which weighed so heavily on occupiers. He asked his hon. friends to remember that a valuation was necessary for that also. The third method was to specialise the whole value—the increment value given to the land in consequence of public improvements—and having, so to speak, specialised that, then they must put a separate tax applicable to ownership. They were all agreed that some of these must come, but the point of this Bill was that it was a preliminary to any one of these, and consequently he submitted that it had been proved with regard to this Bill that without it they could not advance a step in favour of method one, two, or three. He did not despair of the tapping of new sources of taxation. He had never represented it as an El Dorado, but he could repeat with perfect candour and increasing conviction that there were new and not improper sources of revenue still to be tapped. The hon. Member for Edinburgh and the hon. Member for the Leith Burghs had mentioned the subject of costs, and as he might not have another opportunity he thought it right to re-state now in presence of the House what he said to a deputation from the Association of County Councils in Scotland which waited on him in July last. He understood that there was an impression that the local authorities, and Glasgow in particular, would have a heavy bill to pay for valuation. He did not think it would be anything like the ridiculously exaggerated figure which had been suggested. He took it that Mr. Henry, the Glasgow assessor, was the best authority on this subject, and he put it at between £4,000 and £5,000. [AN HON. MEMBER: His own costs.] He was only dealing now with the assessor's costs. It was quite fair to say so.

MR. YOUNGER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has made any estimate of the likely cost of this valuation.

MR. THOMAS SHAW said the best estimate one could get, without doing it oneself, was to be got from the assessor of Glasgow. He was only referring to the public costs. He wished to repeat in this House what he said to the deputation, as the thing was very important to the local authorities in Scotland, and as he quite saw that it might have its corollary in other proceedings in England. He would before reading what he said make this preliminary observation. The local authorities said that they had to make this valuation, but were precluded by the Bill from rating for it. He felt the force of their complaint that the cost of this duty could not be recouped in the proper sense of the term, because of their not having the power of rating conferred by the measure. It was with that in view that he approached the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was able to make this statement last year—

> "A more important matter in which you are interested is what is to be the position of those ten counties which appoint their local assessors, and the expenses with regard to whose operation falls as a county charge."

A member of the deputation interrupted and said, "And the county burghs," and he, continuing his reply, said—

> "My observations apply to burghs also. I am aware that operations for the first year in ascertaining the capital value, although not nearly so involved as some people may think, will certainly involve a very considerable addition to the labour of these skilled men, and in some cases it may be necessary for them to employ skilled assistance. I have, therefore, thought it my duty to represent this matter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I have now his authority for announcing to you that if it should be found—as I think it will be found—that such an addition will be made to the duties of those assessors as really to be in a reasonable sense a fair addition to their duties, worthy of estimating, and worthy of consideration by the Exchequer, the claims by the local authority, on which this initial charge for the first year will thus heavily fall, will receive fair and favourable consideration from the Exchequer, with a view to granting what, in the opinion of the Treasury, is a reasonable subsidy."

He felt that he was bound, in view of the Amendment covering the question of costs, to approach the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He told him that there was doubt in some minds as to whether this pledge, having been given to a deputation of county council members, could be held as applicable to the burghs, and he had his right hon. friend's authority for saying that the pledge would operate all round. If he had made any observations to the deputation which would lead anyone to think it was only the cost for the first and heaviest year, that impression must be removed. It would be a general subsidy which would, of course, in each year be considered by the Treasury and would remain until a system of rating was introduced. He thought it right to allay any misapprehension on that subject. Important as valuation was for any system of rating they wished to devise, important as it was for the ascertainment of any untapped sources of revenue, whether in town or county, the Government held that it would be quite out of the question to cut up this scheme of valuation. They desired it for national purposes on a national scale.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) protested against the action of the Government with reference to this debate. He respectfully submitted that the extremely interesting speech of the Lord Advocate should have been delivered two hours ago, and not within ten minutes or a quarter of an hour of the time when the allotted period for the stage of the Bill would expire. The Government described the Amendment as one of the least importance. Yet by their own action they had made it impossible for any other question to be discussed. In the debate to-day, and in the debates last session, certain main propositions had been made. First of all, hon. Gentlemen opposite held that this Bill was merely for the purpose of getting information. If it was only a Bill to obtain information, surely it should be applied to the whole country, but even hon. Gentlemen opposite, and even the Government themselves, were not agreed as to the real nature of the measure. They were told last year by the Solicitor-General for Scotland that this Bill was intended to be the basis of future taxation, but the Lord Advocate had told them to-day that that was by no means the definite view of the Government. After all this time, the Government had not made up their minds as to what would be the precise effect of the Bill and how it was to be applied. The critics of the Bill had said that it was unworkable, and evidence given before the Royal Commission had been quoted to show that the cost of working the measure would be extravagant beyond degree. They had been told by the supporters of the Bill that it was going to confer unlimited blessings on the land, produce immense new sources of revenue, and do justice where injustice had been done hitherto. If that were true, there would be a good deal to be said for the measure, but the opponents of it had asked in vain for information as to the way in which these good things were to be brought about. He did not wonder, therefore, that opinion in regard to this Amendment was somewhat divided. He had hoped that the Lord Advocate would have told them something of an inquiry conducted by the hon. Member for Halifax throughout Scotland as to the views held by certain Scottish authorities regarding the Bill. The Lord Advocate had complained that the Amendment was moved by an Irish Member and seconded by an English Member. What was that as compared with an English Member daring to put his profane foot in Scotland in order to ask the Scottish people what was their opinion regarding this measure? He did not know whether it was because the hon. Gentleman was an English Member, but the evidence obtained by his Committee showed that even in the constituencies of the Solicitor-General, the Lord Advocate and the Prime Minister, public feeling in regard to the Bill could not be described as enthusiastic. In many cases the feeling was apathetic, while in others it was absolutely hostile. They might have expected that some opinion would have been expressed by a representative of the Government in reply to the Report of the Committee. They were entitled to say that the Scottish people had awakened to the fact that the one advantage that they believed they were going to derive from the Bill, viz., the taxation of feu-duties, had been made impossible by the declaration of the Prime Minister, and they had come to realise that the Bill was not worthy of their acceptance. It was interesting to note that the only member of the Government who had spoken in the debate had passed over this significant fact in complete silence. He had neither attempted to rebut it by proof if it was incorrect, nor to minimise it if, in his opinion, there had been an attempt to mislead the people of Scotland. His hon. friend behind him had said that he was unable to vote for an Amendment unless one county was substituted for another. He presumed that if another county were named the Member for that constituency would say that he was unable to vote for it. It must not be understood that those who supported this Amendment approved of or supported the principle of the Bill. On the contrary, their arguments against this measure stood good. It had not been proved that the cost of the present proposal would not be very heavy indeed, and its practical effect would be very different from what the Government anticipated. Therefore, he maintained that if the Government were going to use the Bill simply for the purpose of experiment, and if they were going to cast on the localities the expense of this work being done, they might in reason confine its operations to a very limited area. He was glad that the Lord Advocate had not used on that occasion the argument that they must have uniformity, because where they wished to obtain information as a means to an end there was no reason why they should not be limited as to area. He begged to dissociate himself entirely from the proposition made by hon. Gentlemen opposite that there should be an Imperial contribution to Scotland in respect of this measure. This was a question on which Scotland had claimed special legislation for herself, and if Scotland was honest, let her pay for it. If she was so anxious to have it, then surely Scotland should not object to pay out of her own pocket the expenditure which she anticipated would result to her own benefit. On the part of those who represented other parts of the United Kingdom he would resist any attempt to enable Scotland to obtain a benefit for herself, as it was alleged she would, at the expense of the whole community. He did not know whether the hon. Member intended to divide on the Amendment; but he would advise him not to do so, because he felt very strongly that it would be an invidious thing to select a particular part of the Bill for condemnation when they condemned the principle of the whole measure. The Amendment had, however, been of the utmost importance in raising this debate, and by not dividing upon it they would not lose the opportunity in the Division Lobby of expressing their profound objection to a Bill which was not calculated to justify the propositions laid down in its support.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) said that he voted for the Second Reading of this measure and did not intend to vote for an Amendment which sought to limit its application. He found himself largely in agreement with the Lord Advocate in the views which the right hon. Gentleman had expressed in his speech on the Amendment. It appeared to him that the right hon. Gentleman desired to assure himself and the country as to what part of the wealth of Scotland was directly connected with land values. In that passion for statistics he found himself completely at one with the right hon. and learned Gentleman, and he only wished he could persuade the Government to carry valuation a little further and apply it to incomes, so that they could ascertain with some degree of definiteness how to adjust taxation in regard to the respective incomes which were taken by those who owned capital and those who owned land. He did not think sufficient account had been taken in the debate of what rates were. He remembered a speech of the Solicitor-General for Scotland, in which he stated that what they wanted was a new standard of rating. That was a very different thing from the views expressed by the Lord Advocate. The Lord Advocate had very properly said that he had confined himself to the suggestions contained in the minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, which were not to establish a new standard of rating, but to put a separate and additional tax on site values. He was one of those who had no objection whatever to land values bearing a somewhat larger proportion of the local burdens than other forms of wealth, though that was an entirely different proposition from advocating the transfer of the whole burden of rating from capital to land. He had no objection to a *pro tanto* relief, but he had strong objection to the proposition that beneficial rates should be charged on land values alone. The suggestion that sewer rates, road rates, police rates, and lighting rates which were merely tradesmen's bills, should be charged on land values alone seemed to him to verge on the ridiculous. Many hon. Members supported the Bill because they recognised that certain local expenditure did benefit in a peculiar degree the owners of land; and in so far as this Bill provided a valuation of the land built upon and the land not built upon in towns, he was heartily in agreement with the suggestion that they should ascertain that value in order to assist the extension of public ownership.

*MR. REMNANT (Finsbury Holborn) said he was anxious to get from the Government an expression of their opinion as to the probable cost of the proposed experiment. All through last session great stress was laid on the fact that this valuation scheme was not going to cost the country very much. When he interrupted the right hon. Gentleman just now he very courteously answered him by saying that in connection with Glasgow the estimate of his chief witness was that the total cost would be something between £4,000 and £5,000. But, the right hon. Gentleman surely forgot that last year it was stated that the city of Glasgow had been for many years engaged in making a registration of the city streets, that comparatively simple proceeding was not finished to this day, and yet it had cost to date over £20,000. How then could it be argued that this much more pretentious valuation scheme involving such delicate negotiations, would cost only £5,000? The right hon. Gentleman in support of his case referred to the example of London, and said that one of the chief officers of the London County Council had given it as his opinion that he could value a whole street of houses within five minutes, and that he did not believe the cost of the valuation of London would amount to more than £5,000. Against that he referred the right hon. Gentleman to the work of making a ground-plan of London by the London County Council. That was commenced when he first joined the London County Council. He was in that Council for nine years and it was not finished yet, although the cost amounted to many thousands of pounds, and it was not likely to be completed for many years to come. Yet the Government would lead the House to believe that their intricate experiments would only cost a few thousands. There were estimates in regard to London and big towns which entirely refuted the argument of the Government. The truth was that the Government had not studied the matter and were afraid to give an estimate.

And, it being a quarter before Eight of the Clock, the Chairman proceeded to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded this day under the Order of the House of 13th February.

Question, "That the word 'each' stand part of the Clause," put, and agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

Whereupon the CHAIRMAN left the Chair to report the Bill to the House, pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Whereupon Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER proceeded to put the Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time," pursuant to the Order of the House of 13th February.

The House divided.—Ayes, 347; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 26).

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'd)
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.

Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duffy, William J.
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,MajorE.Martin(Walsall)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Lewis
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson,J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb,Edmund G.(Leominster)
Lambert, George
Leese,SirJoseph F.(Accrington)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh,Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Murray, James
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncaster
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor,James (Wicklow,W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce,Robert (Staffs,Leek)
Pearson,W.H.M.(Suffolk,Eye)
Philipps,Col.Ivor (S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C.E. (Edinburgh,Central)
Price,Robert John (Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea,Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy. M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards,T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann,SirC.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A. H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (HawickB.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph(Chesh.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J.(Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)

Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Thorne, William
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn (Carm'rth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour,Rt Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bertram, Julius
Bowles, G. Stewart
Boyle, Sir Edward
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cavendish, Rt.Hon.VictorC.W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
ChamberlainRt Hn.J.A. (Worc.
Clark,George Smith(Belfast,N.)
Coates,E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Cox, Harold
Craig,Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple,Viscount
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Fletcher, J. S.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs,G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence (Kent,Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley,H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hill, Sir Clement (Shrewsbury)
Hils, J. W.
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway,Rt.Hon.Sir John H.
Kenyon-Slaney,Rt.Hon.Col.W.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin,S.)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S.(Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorge D.
Smith,Abel H.(Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Soares, Ernest J.
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H.(Lancashire)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson,A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C.B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

CONGO FREE STATE.

*Mr. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) rose to call attention to the affairs of the Congo Free State, and to move: "That this House, being convinced that the present system of administration on the Congo is destructive of the personal liberty and economic rights of the native population and of the freedom of commercial intercourse with the outer world, as guaranteed by the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884 and the Berlin Act of 1885, asks the Government to do all in its power to secure that a fundamental alteration of the system shall be effected by any transfer of control of the State from the present Sovereign to any other authority; and, failing such transfer within a reasonable time, assures the Government of its hearty support in the measures it may be necessary to take, either alone or in conjunction with the other signatories of the Berlin Act, in order to ensure the effective carrying out of its provisions." He said that in moving this Resolution he came before the House as the mouthpiece of what was most truly described in the King's Speech as "the great anxiety felt with regard to the treatment of the native population in the Congo State." The declaration in the Speech was received with deep thankfulness by the people of this country, who, without distinction of sect or party, shared the desire of the Government to see the government of that State humanely administered in accordance with the spirit of the Berlin Act. That night the opportunity was given to him, on behalf of that public opinion, to ask his right hon. friend whether they were any nearer to a solution of the problem and whether the Government were yet within sight of a settlement. That was the ninth Parliamentary debate upon the question within the last five years. It could not be said that they had been impatient. Five years had passed since the House resolved without a single dissentient to invite the then Government—

> "To confer with the other Powers, signatories of the Berlin General Act, by virtue of which the Congo Free State exists, in order that measures may be adopted to abate the evils prevalent in that State."

The five years since then had been almost barren of positive result, so far as actual reform in the Congo State was concerned. The Powers declined to move, and the Congo authorities indignantly denied the statements made in that House, repudiated the charges as calumnious, and challenged those who had made them for proof. Early in 1904 came Consul Casement's report. That was the report of a responsible official of the British Government, and could not therefore be treated as merely travellers' tales or missionary stories. Under pressure from this country a Commission of Inquiry was appointed, to look into the administration of the Congo State. That Committee did not report till the autumn of 1905, and even then, though the evidence was suppressed, the Report, nevertheless, revealed a system by which the natives were mercilessly exploited to breed wealth for foreign masters. The land was the State's, and the products of the land; and the natives were driven to forced labour by an army of occupation, to gather these products. It was a kind of inverted slave trade. Formerly, they took the slaves to a foreign land and made them work there, but they at least fed and housed them well. But under the Congo system, the new slavery was even more profitable, for they made the people labour for them in their own land, and nobody was at any pains to see that the labourers there were properly fed and housed at all. That was a cheaper system which had been worked out by the exploiters of the Congo. The evils could no longer be denied and the Congo Government at once appointed a second Commission which they called a Commission of Reforms. That Commission was to consider necessary reforms. Nothing could be fairer seeming than that. The Commission sat for some months, during which time the system went on unchecked, and in the middle of 1906 came the reform decrees. Those decrees were full of those humane sentiments towards the natives which the Congo Government had so readily at command. Since that, eighteen months had passed under the reform system, and on Monday last a White Book was published and circulated to members of both Houses, which, he ventured to say, no one could read without horror and indignation, and which justified everything which had ever been said against the administration of the Congo State, whether in the country or in the Houses of Parliament. It was difficult to keep within the bounds of Parliamentary language in describing what was happening. He must let our Consuls speak for themselves in the treasured language of official documents. The decrees themselves were fair sounding enough. Mr. Michell, one of our Consuls, described them as "Pecksniffian formulæ," while Mr. Beak said—

> "The Congo official Reports are a series of carefully fabricated falsehoods."

King Leopold said, in a letter circulated with the decrees—

> "There is no more legitimate or respectable right than the right of the author to his own work, the fruit of his labour."

That applied very fittingly, apparently, to the head of the Congo State in Belgium, but it had no relation whatsoever to the natives of the Congo. Under the decrees forced labour was to be abolished. What did the White Book say? Mr. Michell said—

> "The new decrees and the circulars applying them do not in any way modify the *corvée* system hitherto in force."

There was forced labour to-day in the Congo State for transport, food supply, rubber, and for any and every purpose. The worst of those was the rubber tax, which the natives loathed the most. By law this forced labour was limited to forty hours a month, but in fact the natives had to work all the year round, gathering the rubber under those conditions. Mr. Beak told them of one village in which "the collection took up the whole time of all the inhabitants." Mr. Armstrong, another British consul in another district, said—

> "The natives assured me that they spent twenty days and nights in the forest in each month to collect the amount of their tax."

In another village—

> "The natives work from twenty to twenty-five days in the forest collecting the tax."

In another—

> "The chief, capita, and the people were unanimous in declaring that they, the rubber gatherers, spent only four days per month in their village, the remainder of their time being spent in the forest making rubber."

Mr. Armstrong summed up by saying—

> "There is not the least doubt in my mind that the average month's work of every native is not less than twenty days."

So much for the abolition of forced labour. The worst feature, however, was that it was extended in full measure to the women who had to prepare the native's food. Mr. Michell described that as "an unmitigated evil," and Mr. Armstrong declared it was "without precedent" in West Africa. In order to produce her share of the bread to be supplied to the Government, each woman had practically to work incessantly twelve months in the year, and the testimony was that—

> "In consequence of the incessant labour imposed by the tax, the women have practically ceased to bear children."

Well might Consul Thesiger exclaim that—

> "Forced labour such as this differs only in name from slavery."

Mr. Leif Jones.

What was the effect upon the population? They were described in the White Book as—

> "Weary and depressed. The population is weak and obviously overworked and underfed."

and Mr. Michell said that—

> "Though the blacks are accused of laziness, it is well to bear in mind that the climate makes manual labour very severe, even for the natives, who are naked, ill-fed, and worse housed than any other people. These tax their poor stamina to the utmost, and their struggle for life is hard. The infant mortality is frightful. The native has little heart for sustained labour, and the hunting, fishing, and the long distances he has to go for food leave him little energy for work that he considers quite unnecessary."

It was no wonder that the population should be an easy prey to sleeping sickness, and that the country was being depopulated, and that village after village was described as having shrunk in size to a quarter, a third, and even a tenth part of what it used to be. Another great evil was the steady robbing of the country of all its resources. The forests were not properly treated to get the rubber. The vines were being destroyed. He would not take up time by reading more extracts, but the forests were being destroyed, the few cattle, the goats and sheep, which the natives had were rapidly disappearing. The reports of the Consuls showed that fresh food was becoming exceedingly scarce in the country. The administration of the Congo took no note of all that, nor made any effort to prevent the country from being wholly destroyed in that way. Justice there was none for the native, and no attempt was made at administration. Mr. Beak said—

> "Administration in the ordinary acceptance of the term does not exist in the Katanga."

No attempt was made to govern the natives. The authority of the native chiefs had been destroyed. One of the most extraordinary features of the Congo system is the absence of any definite native policy. What was happening before the eyes of civilisation was the murder of a race. The natives were enslaved, trade there was none, administration none, justice none, the population decimated and enfeebled, a ready prey to devastating disease, the country robbed of its resources, its forests ruined, and its live stock destroyed. That was what twenty-five years of civilising, under the guardianship of the Powers of Europe, had made of the Congo State. What was all that for? It was all in order to enrich speculators who never set foot in the Congo but lived all their lives in Europe. No one knew the wealth which had been taken out of the Congo during the last ten years. £1,200,000 had been invested in real estate in Belgium. One company, Kasai, made £1,000,000 sterling in five years, starting with a nominal capital of £40,000. From the Crown Domain, specially reserved to the ruler of the Congo State, over £3,000,000 had admittedly been taken out, while £600,000 a year in direct taxes were taken from the Domaine Nationale. He would be under the mark if he estimated that £2,000,000 a year, by means of the methods he had described, had been taken out of the State during the last ten years. He stood there to say, in the name of outraged public opinion in this country, that that system could not be allowed to go on. The temper of the people was such that they would not allow it to go on. They thought the time had come for the Government to act with decision and directness. They were told that there was a prospect of Belgium being willing to take over the Congo State from its present Ruler. He thought he spoke for nearly all the people of this country when he said that if Belgium volunteered that task of really civilising the Congo that would be a welcome solution. But they had to be on their guard, lest they should force upon Belgium this task, which would tax her very heavily. There was a very important article in that month's *Contemporary Review*, written by the Leader of the Belgian Liberals, in which he used a phrase which struck him very much. He said that Belgium was being "pressed by England to take over the Congo State," and in another part of the article he said that England "invited Belgium to take over the Congo." He did not think any action of ours should force Belgium to undertake this duty, because it was quite certain that if Belgium undertook it, she would have a heavy burden on her hands, and that she ought only to take it over with her eyes open to the consequences of so doing. Had not the time come when Belgium should be told plainly that we in this country could recognise no nominal transfer of authority from the present ruler of the Congo, but only one which would restore to the natives of the Congo their proprietary rights and liberties and open the Congo to real freedom of trade? He wished to say nothing offensive to Belgium's susceptibilities. We in this country were the traditional friends of Belgium. We secured her independence in 1831. We guarded her neutrality in 1870, and he ventured to say we were never more truly friends of Belgium than when we said she ought not to be used as a cloak to cover the nominal transfer to Belgium of the present system of government in the Congo. We were in possession of the proposals of the Belgian Government in regard to the future government of the Congo. He had copies of the Colonial Law and the Treaty of Cession under which the taking over of the Congo by Belgium was recommended by the Belgian Government. In that Colonial Law which had been accepted in its First Reading, at any rate by the Belgian Parliament, and referred to a committee, the future powers of the ruler in the Congo in regard to the legislature, the executive, and the budget, were left untouched. That was to say, if the Colonial Law went through in its present shape, the present King of the Belgians would have in his hands the same power which, as ruler of the Congo, he at present enjoyed, and there was nothing to show that there would be any further limitation upon his power. To be sure that had not yet been accepted by the Belgian Chamber, and they might hope that it would not be, but, at any rate, it was the proposal of the Government, and it was in regard to these proposals that he thought his right hon. friend might well speak out. The Treaty of Cession had actually been signed by the representatives of the Congo State and of Belgium and that had been referred to a Commission. The Commission had not yet reported upon it. because they were told to hold their hand pending an additional treaty which would be submitted to them in regard to a special part of the Congo known as the King's Domain. The proposal in the original

Treaty of Cession had been so severely criticised that fresh proposals were submitted in regard to the Crown Domain by the Government of Belgium, but there was nothing to show that this additional treaty, in regard to which he saw a rumour in the paper that day, that an agreement had been reached between the King and the Government, would modify in any important measure the present system of government in the Congo. Had not the time come when the Belgians should be told that we could only recognise a transfer which would secure full Parliamentary control by Belgium, and which would at the same time reverse the whole administration of the Congo and administer that country in the interests of the native inhabitants? If Belgium would do that we should all rejoice, but it meant a heavy drain upon the resources of Belgium—a drain in men, in administrators (for a different class of administrators was needed in the Congo from those who were there at present), and it meant probably a great loss of revenue, because three-fifths at least of the present revenue of the Congo State was derived from the forced labour, as he had endeavoured to show the House. A fair administration of the Congo in the interests of the natives meant probably that Belgium would have to do as this country had to do with regard to similar territories in Africa—she would have to make annual grants in aid instead of drawing revenue from the country. This question had never been submitted to the Belgium people. There had been no election fought upon it in Belgium. He did not think any election address at the last election contained any references to the Congo State. The Belgians did not know as much about the Congo State or its governmental methods as we did in this country. They were carefully warned against the sources of information on which we relied. They were told that they were born of jealousy of the "glorious" Congo administration, and the subsidised Press Bureau of Belgium had warned them against accepting the statements made in this country. The danger was that Belgium might ignorantly take over the Congo, and the protest against its administration, which would go on, no matter who the administrator might be, so long as the system lasted, would be, directed not against the Congo State, but against Belgium. There was a positive danger confronting us in Africa to-day which called for the closest scrutiny of our Government. There was a very significant passage in the White Book describing the condition of a certain section of the Congo State, where 7,000 or 8,000 men who had revolted against the Congo Government had established themselves. They had defied the Congo Government. They had set up a State within that State. They were fully armed. When they went they had but 5,000 old rifles. Now they were armed with the latest rifles, and they had plenty of ammunition. They carried on slave-raiding near Lake Tanganyika. The White-book said they might at any moment assume the offensive, and in this event a movement hitherto limited in its operations might become a source of positive danger. This danger was intensified by the growing hatred of the whites by the blacks throughout this territory. That was a point which Sir Harry Johnston had dwelt upon a good deal, and he was not an alarmist. Mr. Beak said—

> "I regard the view taken by Sir Harry Johnston as that of an alarmist, but I cannot fail to point out that there exists a sentiment of widespread hatred against the white man."

There was a letter in Monday's *Times* in which Mr. Gilchrist said the natives told him that in their pursuit of rubber they crossed over the boundaries and went into neighbouring territories. He said: "Don't they fight against you when you do that?" and the natives answered: "We used to fight, but now we don't. We have pity on each other because of the white man's treatment of us." The white man's treatment of the blacks was consolidating the blacks against the white man's rule. So whatever Belgium might do we had both a duty and a right in this matter, and he welcomed the suggestion put forward in another place on Monday that more Consuls should be appointed. What they wanted in the Congo was daylight. These deeds that were done would not survive the full blaze of European observation. Let them have plenty of light let in. Let them have a stream of facts from the Congo, and let the Consuls have the means of transport in their hands and not trust to the monopolist transports which existed in the Congo. Let them push their trade in every way possible and let them not wait very long. It was difficult, in reading the history of the last five years, to resist the idea that the present ruler of the Congo had no intention of giving up his control of the resources of the State at all. The question was whether he was not by one suggestion after another, by one delay after another, by one specious pretext after another, playing with the Powers of Europe and preventing them from reaching a solution. Let them again appeal to the Powers. There was more light now than there was in 1903. Let them again appeal to them if in a short period they found that the Belgian solution did not take shape. In 1903 the Powers refused to join England — to-day they might be willing to do so. They knew from the most recent reports that in the United States the same feeling prevailed as in this country and in an intense degree, and they had every reason to believe that the United States would gladly join with them in any measure that might be necessary to procure reform in the Congo. Let them act with the United States. If the Government would act strongly in this matter they would have behind them in this country an instructed and earnest public opinion. After all, the people had always led upon this question of the Congo. It was the people of this country who over-rode the decision of the Government in 1884. The Government wanted to recognise the rights of Portugal in the Congo. The people rose against that under the persuasion of Mr. Stanley and other representatives of the Congo Association. They forced upon the Government of that day practically the recognition of the Congo State. They were responsible for forming that State. Now they knew that they were deceived. Unwittingly they made themselves parties in a great wrong, and they would not rest until the wrong was righted—until freedom in every sense of the word had been restored to the unhappy natives of the Congo.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devonshire, Honiton) said it was a great privilege to second the Motion of his hon. friend, who had explained the situation with the greatest clearness, who had expressed the strong determination and the strong moral sense of the country in regard to this matter, and who had spoken with a statesmanlike moderation which must commend itself to all. The one complaint that he made against him was that he had left very little for his seconder to say. He would, however, like to go back a little further than the hon. Member had done and say how the Congo chapter of African history had been from the beginning a time of high expectation and yet of great disappointment. When Stanley made the discovery of the basin of the Congo, opening up such vast possibilities in Africa and so much fresh knowledge, there was the greatest difficulty in determining to whom this great heritage should be entrusted. There was the question of Portugal. At that time the hour had come and it seemed to some of them that the man had come also. The King of the Belgians in 1886 invited to his palace at Brussels a large conference consisting of different men of Europe, and he happened to be one of them, in order to discuss for a whole week the question of how Africa was to be opened up. He might say that the King of the Belgians inspired all who went to that conference with an earnest belief in his sincerity, and an earnest desire to redress the wrongs of Africa. A few years later with the help of Stanley he brought forward his plan, when Europe was in doubt, of the International Association of the Congo, and he posed as the champion of civilisation and humanity with such effect that he induced Great Britain to recognise his international scheme and to give him that assistance without which any further step would have been impossible. The whole idea was that it was intended for humane and benevolent purposes, but what was it now? Nothing but an enterprise consisting of the accumulation of rubber at an infinite cost of human life and suffering. There was no question as to the facts—they had them in the latest edition confirming all that had been said before. There was an absence of the maintenance of any law and order, let alone the prevention of disease or any settled government at all; there was nothing but a hideous system of tyranny, and slavery, enforced by cannibal soldiers, with loss of life and mutilation. The taxation imposed meant practically 20 francs a head per annum—an enormous amount for such a population as that. The labour tax, fixed at the pleasure of a local official, amounted to twenty to twenty-five days work in the month, which produced 3 kilogrammes of rubber which sold for 37 francs in Antwerp, for which the native received 1 franc 10 centimes and a small handful of salt. The demand for transport had already been detailed. No wonder that the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in another place, speaking for the Government, had stated that the condition of things in the Congo was as great a defiance of treaty rights and of public law, as great a sacrifice of the interests of humanity, as anything the modern world had ever known. The noble Lord might well state that this was a condition of things contrary to the dictates of humanity and treaty obligations. The question was how England could bring the force of her opinion and influence, and her prestige and treaty rights, to bear on Belgium to put an end to this state of things. There was no question as to the position of the King. In a letter he wrote last summer he claimed the Congo as his own private property, and he was trying to sell it at the present time for £6,000,000. No doubt the King was beginning to feel that the state of public opinion would not tolerate the continuance of such a state of things, although he had spoken of leaving the Congo as his legacy to Belgium. But since the vote of last year in the Belgium Chamber, a decision had been come to that the question of annexation must be taken up. What was Great Britain doing now besides watching the negotiations? The Belgian people were beginning to place this question where they had never placed it before, and they must be beginning to realise the great responsibility which would be involved in the matter, and the necessary sacrifices which would have to be made. The question was how could they proceed in the matter. This was not the time to talk of gunboats. We wanted to avoid wounding anybody's susceptibilities, but at the same time they ought to rise to the height of the situation, and endeavour by every means in their power to prevent Belgium from perpetuating this system of the most cruel slavery. This country should make it clearly understood that the Belgium solution must be a real solution, and that with nothing else would the people of this country be satisfied. The Government had behind them a united Press, a united Parliament, and a united people. There was every encouragement to go forward. They might feel disheartened that no progress had been made, but the co-operation of the American people at this crisis, was of priceless value. They had just had an outside sign of this encouragement in the Report of the American Consul. Everything called to the Government to go forward so that, in the words of Lord Lansdowne—

> "An end might be put to a condition of things long regarded by this country with horror and shame."

There must be freedom of trade in the Congo and guarantees for collective and individual liberty. The continued existence of the present state of things was a breach of treaty obligations, a disgrace to humanity, a danger to all Powers who numbered Africans amongst their subjects, and a hindrance to the spread of civilisation. Both the late and the present Government had shown their anxiety and their desire to go forward in this matter. The speech of the Prime Minister at the Guildhall and the mention of this subject in the King's Speech showed the importance that the Government attached to the matter and their desire to deal with it. They did not wish to force the hand of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but they wished to encourage him and to assure him when he saw his way to go forward, that this House and the country would be ready to afford him every support. He had much pleasure in seconding the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, being convinced that the present system of administration on the Congo is destructive of the personal liberty and economic rights of the native population and of the freedom of commercial intercourse with the outer world, as guaranteed by the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884 and the Berlin Act of 1885, asks the Government to do all in its power to secure that a fundamental alteration of the system shall be effected by any transfer of control of the State from the present Sovereign to any other authority; and, failing such transfer within a reasonable time, assures the Government of its hearty support in the measures it may be necessary to take, either alone or in conjunction with the other signatories of the Berlin Act, in order to insure the effective carrying out of its provisions."—(*Mr. Leif Jones.*)

*SIR GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.) said he was quite sure he was expressing the feelings of every Member of the House when he said that those who were taking part in this debate had no desire to embarrass in any way the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. They had the deepest possible sympathy with the right hon. Baronet in the situation in which he was placed in regard to this important matter, and they felt quite sure that his sympathies were with those who supported this Resolution. Therefore, their action was intended to strengthen his hands and to give him what encouragement they were able to give him by the assurance that the great body of public opinion in this country was not only behind him but very strongly behind him, and that that public opinion justified him in taking an even more advanced position than that which he had taken up to the present in regard to this question. He agreed with his right hon. friend opposite that it was somewhat difficult to take part in this discussion without repetition after the very exhaustive history which his hon. friend who moved the Resolution had given. He desired again to express the great anxiety that was felt in regard to the prospects—he would almost say the immediate prospects—of annexation, without any deliberate undertaking on the part of Belgium to alter the system which they believed was mainly responsible for the evils which had been described. He felt that whilst his right hon. friend had no right, of course, to assume officially that this state of things would continue after annexation, there were many grounds upon which he might entertain fears that such would be the case. They should state their views in regard to the state of affairs in the Congo lest without due warning they should allow Belgium to enter on these obligations imagining that this state of things could be continued. He believed the public opinion of this country was aroused to such an extent that, should annexation take place without a complete and drastic change in the system of government on the Congo, his right hon. friend would be placed in a very serious position, because that public opinion must then force him to take action in circumstances which, perhaps, would be more difficult than they were at the present time. From all the information that reached this country, he thought they had the utmost warrant for not feeling any degree of hope that these great changes were contemplated. He urged his right hon. friend to take such steps as would leave the Belgian Government in no doubt whatever as to the determination of this country as to the existing condition of things. Hon. Members who were present recently at the great meeting held in the Queen's Hall and presided over by the Lord Mayor must have been impressed with the hollow mockery of the whole situation. At that meeting the reply of the King of the Belgians to the address presented by the City of London on the initiation of the Congo Free State was read at length. It must have presented itself to that meeting as an indictment of the whole conduct of the King of the Belgians, for not a single promise that he then made, not a single obligation he entered into in that document, had been in any sense fulfilled. If those obligations had been fulfilled, millions of lives would have been saved; unheard of cruelties would have been avoided; legitimate trade and commerce, in which this nation would have had its fair and reasonable share, would have been carried on; the rights of humanity would have been respected; and the twentieth century would not have had to hide its head in shame that such a page of history should be written. He had no desire to use intemperate language on this question, but it really was extremely difficult, in view of the circumstances which had been described by his hon. friends, to use language that was within the bounds of Parliamentary practice; and one was greatly tempted to say very strong things. It was the system they indicted—the system which denied to the natives any proprietary rights in the soil of their country or its natural products. The terrible charges had again and again been proved up to the hilt. Therefore, he was sure that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would not wonder that a very large number people were growing impatient. He would give his right hon. friend the credit for believing that he was growing very impatient himself. Many months ago now, his right hon. friend had said in that House, "We cannot wait for ever." They were asking when the time limit would expire. Whilst negotiations had proceeded, and despatches passed from one country to another, there had been no armistice to the cruelties that went on in the Congo State, and the natives had had no relief of the burdens laid upon them or of the cruelties which they had so unjustly borne. Even the Under-Secretary had said that these debates could not go on for ever without producing results. He was afraid that the results from these debates had been very small, and he was not sure that they were not likely to continue very small. Many of them had grave reason to believe that contentious debates both in the Belgian Parliament and here were looked forward to with eagerness by those who were reaping the results of their cupidity and crime. The last proposition that had been made was that the King of the Belgians was prepared to dispose of that which, in his judgment, never belonged to him for six millions of money. Here was an offer of the bodies and souls of men, and all that rightly belonged to them, for a few miserable millions of money! In consequence of the system which had been practised, the King had little to offer except a devastated and partly depopulated State. Lord Cromer, in his noble speech, had declared that the practices in the Congo were contrary, not only to the dictates of humanity, but to treaty obligations. Why had we not insisted on the enforcement of our treaty rights? We had in this case a combination which did not always happen under similar circumstances. We had the interests of humanity and of trade going along the same lines, but King Leopold disregarded both. This condition of things was intolerable, and we should make it known that we would bear it no longer. He knew that prudence was a great virtue, and especially in a Foreign Minister. They all greatly admired that virtue in the present Foreign Secretary, but he thought his right hon. friend had carried prudence as far as he could consistently carry it. They had admired the right hon. Gentleman's great caution in this respect, but now they felt that the time had come for something more than the exercise of mere prudence. There was a time when resolution became even a greater virtue than prudence, and he ventured to suggest that that time had now come. He and his friends in making this earnest protest were convinced that they were speaking what was felt by the bulk of the Anglo-Saxon race throughout the world. If there was continued refusal to carry out the obligations of the treaty, what was their duty in the circumstances? Of course, as an irresponsible Member of the House it would be easy for him to suggest certain methods by which they could enforce these obligations. For his part he would like to see the treasure which was so violently wrenched from the inhabitants of the Congo intercepted before it reached the coffers of the man who was responsible for this state of things. Ought they not to consider whether they had reached a point when diplomatic relations with the King of the Belgians should be suspended if he was going to justify his rule in the Congo—a rule unparalleled in the history of savage tribes? Ought they to treat him as one of the community of European sovereigns? Ought they not rather to make him feel that unless he could put an end once and for ever to these atrocities they could no longer recognise him as a monarch who was capable of carrying on his relations with the inhabitants of the Congo Colony in a way which was equitable and fair? He hoped that his right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary would be able to give some assurance that a forward step would now be taken.

Surely the right hon. Gentleman ought to be able to assure the House that he was not standing alone, that there were other signatories to the treaty who were equally moved with ourselves by the horrors of the Congo? Was the moral standard of Europe so lowered that those tales of sorrow and woe for which they were partly responsible did not move them to take any action at all? He would not believe it. But if it were so, he maintained that this country, which had ever been in the van to take care that justice was done to native races, should instruct King Leopold that this nation was firm and consistent in its determination to put an end to such cruelties. And if King Leopold would not yield to this limited pressure, and listen to the voice of reason and justice, this nation would be prepared to back up our Government in taking the strongest measures possible. He had great pleasure in supporting the Motion.

*SIR H. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.) said that he would say nothing whatever of the existing facts in the Congo Free State. They were now proved beyond any possibility of doubt, and it was hardly possible to exaggerate them. Their nature was such that even to state them frankly was impossible in any public assembly. He asked permission to make a few remarks from the point of view of foreign politics in general, and of our personal responsibility as a nation and as individuals. This was not an academical question of high, complicated, and delicate statecraft. It was, as he conceived it, a question of plain national honour and, therefore, of plain national duty. It seemed to him that, without exaggeration or cant, we were so much involved in this matter that any man amongst us who knew the facts must feel compelled to say: "My country is disgraced by them; I myself am disgraced by them." If that view was right, it behoved every one of them, he would not say to bring such pressure, great or little, as was in their power on the Government, but at least to do what they could to strengthen the hands of the Government in taking action in the direction so ardently desired by the country. For his own part, he was certainly pledged to his constituents to do so on every possible occasion. As he had said, this was not a question of highly complicated, nerve-straining statecraft. People sometimes talked of Macedonia and the Congo. There was no possible comparison between the two from the point of view of foreign affairs. The Balkan question was perhaps the most difficult, delicate, and menacing question in all foreign politics. It was the nightmare of diplomatists throughout Europe. It was a question which some of the most acute observers of European events despaired of seeing solved except by the results of an awful war. Moreover, the Macedonian question was one on which we were quite liable to the remark on the part of great military nations on the Continent that it was all very well for us to do the talking and the writing, but if conflict came it would be they who would have to do the fighting. There was a certain amount of truth in that jibe. In regard to the Congo we stood in a totally different position. We could make it clear that as a nation we had no ulterior motive to serve; we could impose upon ourselves a self-denying ordinance leaving us with perfectly clean hands. In the next place, we stood on an absolutely undeniable treaty right. In fact we in this country had two treaty rights. We and the United States stood as regards treaty rights in a preferential position, because our treaty rights antedated even the Berlin Act, to which of course we are also parties. As his hon. friend had said, our treaty rights had been disregarded in this matter in the most barefaced manner possible, and the defence of them was perfectly proper at the hands of the Government. In the third place, there was no risk if we moved in this matter of rousing the susceptibilities or envy of any foreign nation. He felt sure, and all of them who knew Belgium as he himself did would be sure, that in so far as in the future the Belgium people became acquainted with the facts, the vast majority of them would hold the same point of view as we ourselves did. There was no fear whatever that in any action we might take we should set ourselves in opposition to a friendly nation, considering how much Belgium owed to us in the past and how much her integrity depended upon us to-day. The steps we were called upon to take were certainly easy ones. As his hon. friend the Member for North-West Norfolk had said, there was nothing more easy than for un-official Members to point out what steps should be taken, compared with the Foreign Secretary, upon whom the responsibility rested. But in this matter the steps were quite open—the assertion of our treaty rights in regard to foreign trade, that no monopolies in the Congo should be granted, and that we should be officially represented in the country by Consuls with official districts. All those rights were so simple that, with every sympathy towards those who occupied a position of great responsibility, it seemed to him almost incomprehensible that there should be so much reluctance to take such steps. Finally, there was no doubt that we had the United States conscience behind us, and with that conscience we should have the strength also of that great nation behind us. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs said the other day in another place, "These debates go on, but no results are achieved." Too true. He was sorry that his noble friend could have made that remark, and he was sorry that there had been occasion for him to make it; but he was still more sorry for the truth of it. These debates went on. As his right hon. friend reminded him, it was fourteen years since he had first introduced this subject into the House; and it was nearly five years since his hon. friend on the Treasury Bench, the hon. Member for the Cleveland division, had moved a Resolution in the House, in terms of peculiar felicity, which was carried without dissent. The debates did still go on, and no results were achieved. Another Parliament had been elected, and the great representative assembly, and the great non-representative assembly, had debated this question and passed Resolutions. Many hon. Members had made eloquent and convincing speeches, but still, as the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had stated, there was little better to say than that these things went on and no results were achieved. That statement, however, was not entirely accurate, for a certain result had been achieved. One more British Vice-Consul had been appointed in the Congo Free State! A second result was, as Lord Fitzmaurice had stated in the House of Lords, that the difficulties in Belgium were greater than before, and the attitude of certain persons there was more uncompromising. These were unsatisfactory facts indeed, but they were the only results except that to which his hon. friend had so touchingly alluded, those which had blackened the face of the world and seared their common humanity, in regard to what had taken place in the grossly misnamed Congo Free State. It was a fact beyond all possibility of doubt that the people of this country were deeply stirred by the horrors which had taken place there. It was many years since a purely moral question had come so close to the hearts and minds of people in this country, who would have had every excuse if they had given all their attention to the needs and demands of their own circumstances. In conclusion, he had two observations to make. In the first place—and attention had been called to this before, though too much stress could not possibly be laid upon it—that we incurred a much greater risk by waiting than by acting. It might be difficult, only the Foreign Secretary knew how difficult, to act now, but if we permitted the Belgian people in ignorance to set their hands to a compact which we, standing firm on our treaty and human rights, could not agree with, then the situation would be an incomparably more difficult and more dangerous one, because when the Belgian people put their hands to a compact they would think their national honour was involved in seeing it through, and the position of our Government would be far more difficult. It was one of the cases very frequent in human life when the boldest thing was the easiest and safest. One remembered the line of the despairing king who said—

> "Words without thoughts never to Heaven go."

And he would say, words without acts would accomplish nothing. Words spoken in this House and elsewhere, printed words in our newspapers, written words in our dispatches circulating around Europe all these years, without acts, would necessarily and finally degenerate into cant. Our national honour and our national dignity were involved in this matter. We owed it to our honour as a nation; we owed it to our dignity, standing on our treaty rights; we owed it to one another; we owed it to civilisation; each man, it seemed to him, owed it to his self-respect, to face this alternative—this was certainly not said in criticism of the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary or his predecessor—frankly now to face this alternative; either to begin acting or to stop talking.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich) felt that it was right that the Party with which he was associated should be identified with this Resolution, for, after all, they might claim that a party in Belgium, of kindred organisations and aims with the one on whose behalf he spoke, took a view of this matter that they themselves heartily appreciated. He felt, perhaps, that this was a fitting and opportune time for this Resolution to be considered by the House, especially in view of the special annexation proposal now before the Belgian Government. Undoubtedly, the question was hedged around with many difficulties, and he knew no party in the House who would like to utter any sentiment calculated to increase the difficulties of the Belgian people in the Congo; but having regard to the proposals made by the Belgian Government in November last year, which had regard to the treaty rights we claimed in the matter, this country had a duty to perform and ought to make its view of the situation perfectly plain. It was not his attention to allude very closely to the rule of King Leopold in the Congo State, but they found after twenty-five years of that rule the condition of things there remained unparalleled in any part of the world, except it might be in Turkey. King Leopold had monopolised for his own advantage the yield of rubber, gum, and ivory over nearly the whole extent of a territory twenty-four times the size of Belgium. He had imposed upon the natives, under the pretext of taxes in kind, a system of forced labour which he believed the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had himself characterised as little short of slavery. Despite all this the income of the Free State was not sufficient at the outset to cover the expenses, so in 1890 and subsequently in 1895 King Leopold applied to the Belgian Government for aid, because he found that he was unable to carry on the administration of the Congo Free State without further assistance. He was lent in two instalments 31,000,000 francs, and in return the Belgian Government thought they had secured the unconditional right to take possession of the Congo whenever they thought fit, even during the lifetime of the King. The question of annexation seemed, under such conditions, to be a comparatively simple matter. But in 1906 the King addressed to his Secretaries of State an open letter, wherein he pretended to forget that the rights of Belgium were based on a contract entered into in consideration of money lent him, and claimed to make the eventual annexation subject to conditions of which he had never previously spoken. Belgium could get possession of the Congo, he said, but must bind itself to respect the private domains created by King Leopold II. himself, and especially the "Domain of the Crown" established by him for the purpose of bribing the Press, keeping his favourites, carrying on public works without the consent of Parliament, and other objects of an even more doubtful character. The Belgian people had become greatly alarmed at the prospects indicated by the publication of the King's letter. It had raised a genuine storm in the Belgian Parliament. Socialists and Liberals alike in that Parliament had combined in interrogating the Government as to whether it agreed with the King, and it had resulted in the House unanimously affirming the intention of Parliament to carry out at an early date the unconditional transfer of the Congo Free State to Belgium. This was thought to have settled the terms of transfer, but under the Bill introduced on 26th November last year Belgium undertook to respect the existing foundations of the Congo. That was a clear return to the claims rejected by a Resolution of the Chamber. To annex the Congo and to uphold the domains of the Crown would be to run a grave risk of the continuance of the present conditions of oppression of the natives, and at the same time might involve the country in a heavy deficit, whilst the King would continue to derive his ample resources from his reserved territory. The colonial law indicating the broad lines upon which Belgium proposed to manage the Congo showed that the King would be left in full control of executive power, legislative function, and the budget. The Treaty of Cession embodying the terms upon which King Leopold and the Belgian Government were agreed in connection with the transfer of the Congo to Belgium left the whole system unchanged. The powers and privileges of the great monopolist trusts remained untouched, and the native population would be left in its present condition of economic servitude and bodily slavery. These conditions directly violated the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884, and the Berlin Act of 1885, under which King Leopold was thought to be restricted from doing what he liked with the Congo. He was looked upon there as the trustee of civilisation. So clearly was this understood at the time that Monsieur Beernaert, the Belgian Prime Minister who won the Belgian Chamber over to the King's scheme, described the Congo State thus—

> "The State of which our King will be the sovereign will be an international colony. There will be no monopolies, no privileges; quite the contrary; freedom for all, freedom of barter, of property, of commerce, and of navigation."

All these statements had been frequently abused and the enterprise debased so as merely to provide profits for King Leopold and his financial partners at a fearful cost of human life and suffering. There used to be some doubt as to whether the stories which had reached the ears of the people in this country as to what took place in the Congo were true, but latterly they had had plenty of opportunities of receiving authoritative evidence, and no one could read the White Book recently issued without being thoroughly convinced that revolting barbarities were practised upon the natives of the Congo State. The whole system was based upon a violation of native rights to their land and products and to their liberty, and it was no exaggeration to say that a system of absolute slavery prevailed in the Congo State at the present time. In fact, he believed that the existing conditions were even worse than those which prevailed in the old days of slavery, for the slave in those days was sure of a sufficiency of food and shelter, otherwise his labour would lack productivity, but under the conditions obtaining in the Congo under King Leopold and those associated with him, they seemed to hold themselves under no such obligations towards the natives. The present modifications of the scheme proposed by the Belgian Government might provide that Belgian constitutionalism should be protected from autocracy, but their point was that the conditions in the Congo State would remain unaltered, even with these modified constitutional adjustments. In the White Book that had been issued they found that through the operation of the labour tax the native was practically tied down from one year's end to another to a life of continual labour for the State. In fact, it seemed that the natives of the Congo State existed for no other purpose than to provide revenues for the King and the companies that had been established there. Not content with fixing the price of the native products, they compelled the native to accept his payment in kind in lieu of money, and this lack of currency in the State had been one of the gravest evils, because the native had no means of knowing what remuneration he was entitled to for his labour. In fact, he received no standard of remuneration, and was compelled, he believed, to accept his reward in kind, which brought his remuneration down to less even than the low cost of labour as fixed by the State itself, he having to dispose of the articles given to him at a small price in order to provide himself with the necessaries of life. It was said that the tax to be paid in labour and products was based theoretically on the idea of forty hours work a month, whereas experience went to prove that in practice the amount due was invariably exceeded and seemed to be limited only by the needs of the State or the working capacity of the native. The White

Book showed such a state of things under the rule of King Leopold that seemed to him to warrant this country in intervening especially having regard to the treaty obligations that had been referred to in the course of the debate. In conclusion, he would say that the Party with which he was associated regarded the conditions in the Congo as a gross invasion of human rights, when the proprietary rights of 20,000,000 African natives in their soil and its products could be swept away in such a manner as was proposed by King Leopold and his Government. They felt that this country had a duty to perform in upholding its treaty obligations. We had a very heavy debt to pay to our common humanity. He was favoured by being able to associate himself with a question which was certainly not a party question, but one which excited no hostility in any quarter of the House or country. Everyone desired to see the Government take action to right these wrongs and to remove this blot from civilisation. It had been truly said that nations were the citizens of humanity, just as people were the citizens of nations, and he hoped in the course of his reply the right hon. Gentleman would be able to give the House an assurance that action would be taken to protect the natives in the Congo, and that this great blot on our civilisation would be removed.

*MR. GWYNN (Galway) said he supported the Motion before the House from a point of view considerably different from that of those who had already addressed the House. It did not appear to him that any European nation could afford to be self-righteous with regard to West Africa. There was not one which had not the deep black stain on its escutcheon. It was easy, whether the nation was Germany, France, or England, to frame a terrible indictment against it. But the Government of the Congo stood out by itself. The charge brought against the Government of the Congo could not be brought against any other Government. In the Congo they had a government not only administrator but merchant, which was the worst device of government the world had ever seen. That, however, was not a question for himself and his colleagues to consider, and he rose to make it clear that although this had been represented as a question of Roman Catholic against Protestant, the sympathy of Catholic Ireland would not be with King Leopold if it were proved as he held it to be proved, that the Congo offered an example of rack-renting on the grandest scale the world could show. Some of his colleagues took a different view from that which he now put, and, to be candid to the House, it was easy to see that the reason for that was that to a certain extent the outrages, or the supposed outrages, in the Congo had been such as to strain credulity. But most of his colleagues had taken that view from their instinctive distrust of the justice of Great Britain. He did not take that view. He had a great respect for the justice of this country so long as it had nothing to do with the administration. It was a most unfortunate coincidence for this country that, as the hon. Member for Norfolk had said, the interests of humanity coincided with the interests of trade. Let it be made quite clear to the world that their righteous indignation was not going to point the way to their political advantage. In this case the influence of the United States was infinitely greater than that of England, simply because she had no interests at stake. He recognised gladly that at the present time it was easier for England to intervene in this matter than it was some time ago. When in a fit of megalomania they engaged in promoting the Cape to Cairo railway they could not have intervened without appearing to aim at a definite, and declared political interest. He could not conceive how Belgium herself was ever to pass over her obligations to any other Power, and therefore pressure must be put on Belgium to see this thing through. His concern, however, was not for the European Powers, but simply and solely for the people of the Congo. African slavery was freedom to what went on there. He associated himself with the view on this whole matter expressed not by any Englishman or Protestant, but by the Rev. A. Vermeersch, a Belgian Jesuit in his book *La Question Congolaire.*

*SIR FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) said that he would like first of all to congratulate the House upon having a debate absolutely unique in its unanimity and remarkable for the suggestive, sagacious, and weighty speeches which had analysed the moral and political aspects of the case. There had been several comments upon the fact that upon questions this debate had hitherto become purely academic. He had no doubt that his right hon. friend shared the objection that had been expressed to mere abstract discussion and also the feeling that we did not want this debate to be a mere repetition of the long series of academic debates which had done nothing which would make any real change in the condition of these wretched people, or remove the shame and dishonour from this country for acquiescing tacitly in such a state of things or would aid the friendly people of Belgium to right themselves in the eyes of the world and of humanity. He heartily congratulated his hon. friend who initiated the debate upon the speech he had made. His hon. friend had said that we wanted daylight in the Congo, but he ventured to say that those who had followed the difficulties of this question in Belgium and in the Belgian Parliament during the last eighteen months felt that what was wanted was daylight in the Belgian Parliament. He shared with the hon. Member for Norfolk his opinion and appreciation of the judgment and caution and the marvellous power of rhetorical statement of his right hon. friend the Secretary of State. He might be wrong, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman would clear up his doubts by his speech, but it seemed to him that the Foreign Secretary had a faith in the Belgian solution merely as a Belgian solution. If they believed with a blind confidence that with annexation carried out somehow, and with the Belgian Parliament placed in power to deal with the question, reforms would automatically accomplish themselves, and these horrors be one by one removed by publicity and discussion, then, he ventured to say, the history of the question disproved the assumption and ought to show the right hon. Gentleman that such an anticipation would not bear close inspection. What had been the course of the history of these transactions so far as the ripening of the Belgian solution was concerned? There was no doubt that in the Belgian Parliament that solution had been hurried by the impression that it was demanded by this country. There was no doubt that the King and his party had availed themselves of that feeling of British pressure in order to a certain extent to blind, bewilder, and mislead the opinion of the Belgian people upon the question. In the remarkable article which had appeared this month in the *Contemporary Review* by M. Georges Lorand, leader of the Liberal Party in the Belgian Chamber, it had been made perfectly clear that the people were not aware of the facts and did not understand the conditions under which annexation was being proposed, nor did they foresee its financial, moral, and political results. What had the discussions on the treaty of annexation amounted to? They had amounted to no real appreciation of the vital issues at stake. The only real point on which there had been a struggle between the Belgian Parliamentary spirit and the attitude of the King and the Concessionaires had been as to the disposal of the produce of the Domaine de la Couronne. Those who had closely observed the condition of affairs in Belgium must have come to the conclusion that the whole position was due to the fact that the vast treasures extorted from the sufferings of the people of the Congo had been utilised to buy and debauch public opinion in Belgium. The only concession obtained by these discussions in Belgium was that the Belgian Parliament and people were being bribed to acquiescence by being invited by the King and his party to share in the distribution of the spoils. He therefore asked the House whether they were right in allowing the matter to drift any further. Were they committed to the Belgian solution on the mere theory that the handing over of the Congo to the Belgian Parliament would bring reform automatically? It was the moral and political duty of this country, as a friend of Belgium and as the originator and guarantor of the very existence of Belgium, to make it clear to the Belgian people that in taking up this responsibility they must take it as a whole and not on any false terms. They must be made to clearly understand that there would be an economic loss and that they would have to face it. We could not let them proceed further groping in the dark towards a solution which they did not fully grasp, and which would inevitably lead them by economic pressure to perpetuate the terrible system of forced labour, which alone would, under existing circumstances enable them to make ends meet. He remembered that when the question was last discussed the noble Lord opposite very wisely and pertinently spoke of this as an economic question, stating that the European Concert ought to face the responsibility of enabling Belgium to deal with the economic side of this tremendous difficulty by granting them the right to charge certain customs duties. If Belgium really reformed the Congo system it would have to face a deficiency of revenue, and we ought to suggest the means and opportunity of enabling them to meet it. He had read the remarkable White-book placed in their hands within the last day or two. He was immensely struck with the various allusions by Vice-Consul Michell and other authorities as to the resources of the Congo in the cultivation of other produce than rubber, and in the development of other industries. There were many other products which might be developed and enable the Belgian Government, if they took the Congo over, to make it a paying State. Why could we not make it clear to the Belgian people and to the Belgian Government and Parliament that we meant business, and that we were determined to take our part, even at the risk of seeming to interfere, in making the conditions of annexation absolutely clear before they arrived at a settlement of the terms of the treaty of annexation, and to insist on all the principles of the Anglo-Congolese and Berlin Treaties being embodied in that document? We should also in the most conciliatory and friendly way point out to the Belgian Government by what methods they could work the Congo so as to make it a commercial success and pay its way without these horrors being perpetrated. We had a friendly duty to the Parliament and nation of the Belgians in that connection as well as in demanding that these reforms should be embodied in the treaty. He did not agree with the hon. Member for Wolverhampton that this was an easy and simple task. He rather agreed with the wise words which had fallen from the Foreign Secretary in previous debates that, although it was not so complicated a question as that of Macedonia, yet it was a question of profound diplomatic difficulty and of the gravest complication, needing the wisest and most cautious handling. It was for that reason that he regarded with satisfaction the fact that it was in the hands of his right hon. friend. He, however, urged him to attach full weight to the arguments of the hon. Member for Wolverhampton and many other speakers that we should not lose this happy moment, before the terms of the treaty were settled, to make the whole situation, economic as well as political and moral, clear to the people of Belgium and to make them comprehend that the whole of the Empire was behind our purpose. If we took this course here and now we should be in a far stronger position. A great statesman could make a representation to a people even in such a complicated and difficult matter. He could make a representation which would be accepted in a friendly sense of co-operation, and he invited the right hon. Gentleman to make use of words which would clear up the matter once and for all for the Belgian Government and place it on a plane which would result in actions and not merely in words.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I am, of course, well aware that the strength of feeling which has found expression in the House this evening is a feeling not confined to this House, but represents an equal strength of feeling in all parts of the country outside. It is not, I think, too much to say that no external question for at least thirty years has moved the country so strongly and so vehemently as this in regard to the Congo. It is not merely both sides of this House that share this feeling; it is both sides of the other House as well. The debate in the other House, a short time ago, covered the same ground and brought out the same expressions of feeling. There was no dissentient voice at all. And I am glad that one hon. Member has in this debate recognised the force and volume which is added to the discussion of the Congo by Lord Cromer's intervention in another place. I do not think the matter could be summed up more forcibly, considering Lord Cromer's great experience, than by recalling to the House the fact that in effect he said that, in all his long and varied experience, the system in the Congo was the worst he had ever seen or of which he had ever heard. But now my task is more difficult than that of any of those who have spoken. I have to address myself to the practical side of the question, and I have also to do what I can to ensure that the feelings and sentiments which have found expression in this House, and which we ourselves know are genuine and sincere, are not misunderstood elsewhere. In the first place, there is no religious difficulty existing among the people on this question. It has been alleged that that has poisoned the controversy on previous occasions, and I welcome on that ground especially the intervention of the hon. Member for Galway, who has made it clear on this occasion in this House that it is not one particular section of Christianity which is represented, and that no religious difference of opinion affects our sentiments with regard to the problem. In the next place, I should like to make it clear that we do not claim on behalf of the people of this country any greater right or interest than is made on behalf of others, and that everything we say is said without prejudice to the interests that others may have. There is, of course, the interest of Belgium and of France, and the arrangement with Belgium giving her a contingent pre-emption which, though arranged between her and Belgium, has been known to the world for many years. I should like it to be clearly understood, also, that anything we say and any action we may take is not intended to impair or belittle the legitimate interests of any other country in the Congo, and that we have no desire to establish political or territorial claims for ourselves. On the contrary, we not only do not desire to assume more responsibility, but we wish to avoid incurring it. I should like also to make this plain—that in the condemnation which we have expressed, and rightly expressed, because I believe every word of condemnation uttered in this debate, is fully justified, there is nothing directed against Belgium itself. It has been too often alleged that our condemnation of the system of government in the Congo is directly or indirectly a condemnation of Belgium. No one recognises more fully than we do that Belgium up to the present moment has had no responsibility whatever in anything which has taken place in the Congo. I go further than that, and I would call the attention of the House to the fact that once the question has been raised as to whether Belgium should or should not assume responsibility for the Congo, a real genuine expression on behalf of public opinion in Belgium has taken place of anxiety, apprehension, and indignation at what the state of affairs has been. I am convinced of this also, that if Belgium is going to interest itself in the matter, Belgian public opinion will feel as strongly and judge as rightly as any other public opinion, provided that it has full knowledge of the facts. We have always favoured what has come to be known in debate as the Belgian solution, and I should like to consider for a moment why that has been so. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton said that what was wanted was acts. Yes, Sir, I agree; but what acts? The one action which really covers the whole ground, the one action which would be a satisfactory solution of the Congo question, is a transfer from the existing authority to some other authority. It cannot be transferred to ourselves. We have no right to put forward our claim to assume responsibility for the Congo, nor do we desire it. But without a transfer you will not get the question settled. The present existing authority is perfectly hopeless; and the policy of the Government has been directed to favouring and encouraging by any means in their power the real transfer from the existing authority of the Congo to another which will accept it with a due regard to its responsibility. The natural transfer is from the present Sovereign of the Congo State to Belgium. You cannot pass that by without passing by the right of Belgium which has been admitted. If there is not a transfer to Belgium, then to whom else is it to be? Belgium has shown a disposition to assume responsibility, and if Belgium does not assume it I do not know who else is going to assume it. I agree that if the Belgian Parliament should accept the transfer of the Congo State to the Belgian nation on terms which involve nominal responsibility without real control, it would be exceedingly disastrous. I do not believe that anything of the sort will take place. I cannot believe that the Belgian Parliament would agree to accept responsibility for the government of the Congo in the present state in which it is unless it was also to have a real and full control. I say at once that, as far as we are concerned, any semi-transfer of that kind which left the real control and the real Executive in the power of the present authorities would not be one which we should regard as giving any satisfactory guarantee that treaty rights would be observed. What we have contemplated when we have spoken of the Belgian solution is a clean and thorough transfer, and that means that the transfer should be such as to give real effective Parliamentary control. This is a point that was emphasised by Lord Cromer in another place the other day. Given real effective Parliamentary control, the other results that we desire must follow. In the first place, you will have gained this—that there will be a separation of the administrative from the trading element. That has been at the root of the whole mischief. The State has been the trader. If you have a clean transfer to the Belgian Government, with full Parliamentary control, the administrative and the trading elements are separate. In the next place under any such tranfer, all revenue, all taxes, whether raised in money or in kind, will naturally be devoted to the interests of the Congo State itself. But I go further, and say we agree that it must be a condition precedent to any transfer of the Congo to another authority, that that authority should take it over on terms which will place it in a position to give assurances and to guarantee that those assurances shall be carried out and the treaty obligations of the Congo would be fulfilled. But at present when we do not know what those terms will be, and when as far as we do know anything, we know this—that there is a critical discussion going on between the Belgian Government and the Sovereign of the Congo State as to what the terms shall be, it is impossible for us to intervene officially between the Belgian Government and the Sovereign of the Congo State in any way that is likely to promote a satisfactory solution. When the Belgian Government proposes its own terms to Parliament, then we can express our opinion. But as long as the matter is in solution between the King and the Belgian Government, I believe that official intervention on our part would not contribute anything to a satisfactory solution. This debate and the publication of the White Paper may serve a good purpose in this respect. It brings out clearly what the existing state of things in the Congo is; and it makes it equally clear that if that state of things is to be put an end to—if the forced labour system that Mr. Thesiger calls "veiled slavery" is to be put an end to—there will probably at first be a large falling off in the revenue, and a corresponding obligation on the part of the Government of the Congo to provide for the administration. No one can read that White Paper without realising that there is a very serious task before any Government undertaking to reform the Congo; and that it may be burdened at first with a very considerable financial liability. One hon. Member repudiated the idea that we were in any way going to force the taking over of the Congo on the Belgian Government. That only shows how unaccountably misrepresentations of our intentions and actions are circulated abroad. I had never heard before that there was such an idea that we should in any way attempt to force anything on the Belgian Government.

*MR. LEIF JONES: M. Lorand speaks of it as a recognised fact in Belgium.

SIR EDWARD GREY: What I want to emphasise is that the fact that that has been in existence without my knowing it even, shows how extraordinarily one has to be on one's guard against misrepresentations and misinterpretations of anything that has been said. I could never have believed it possible that such an idea could have gained credence in any quarter. Nothing could be further from our purpose than in any way to impede, or fetter, or influence the choice of the Belgian people in the matter. All that we desire—and that is why I have been chary of saying much on this question—at critical moments is that the choice of the Belgian people should be absolutely free. But it is also equally desirable, in fact it is essential to a free choice, that that choice should be made with full knowledge of the conditions in the Congo at the present time. For that reason amongst others, I am glad that we have been able to publish now the Reports that are before the House. I should be glad if every Member of the House would read, at any rate, the very able summing up by Mr. Thesiger in the last Paper as to the condition of affairs in the Congo; and I should be still more glad if it could be read and studied in Belgium as it is studied here. That report of Mr. Thesiger has nothing sensational about it. On the contrary, he says that atrocities have diminished, and that the people in some districts are relieved by the present condition of things. But one can judge from that one paragraph in his despatch how appalling the situation in the Congo has been and still is. Mr. Thesiger says—

> "The system which gave rise to these abuses still continues unchanged, and so long as it is unaltered, the condition of the natives must remain one of veiled slavery. Their own feeling at present seems to be one of relief that the former acts of violence and cruelty have so largely diminished and that the sentry system is abolished; but it is very largely the fear of a return to the former state of things that makes them endure the incessant work and hardship entailed on them by the labour-tax with so little complaint except as regards the paucity of their remuneration."

I do not know that you could have any stronger condemnation of what the Government in the Congo has done than that it should be said in a calm, moderate despatch that the present state of things is felt by the natives as a relief, when the present state of things is such as is described in the earlier passages—where the forced labour is such that, in some parts, each woman has practically to work incessantly for twelve months in the year; where, in other districts, under the most favourable conditions, 216 days a year are required for the men to collect the tax imposed, and where, in other districts again, the tax, which is assessed at forty hours' labour per month, makes the natives work from twenty to twenty-five days out of every thirty, and where you find that, in some parts of the Congo, where the amount of the tax has been reduced, it has not been reduced because it was regarded as excessive, but because, owing to the exhaustion of the district, it has become impossible to collect it. With regard to our own position in the matter, we have been invited to co-operate with the other Powers. Nothing would give us greater pleasure; but any one who realises the situation which we discussed yesterday evening will see that at the present moment it would be inexpedient for us to take the initiative in approaching other Powers to ask them to take up another question. But if they desire to co-operate with us, if they but express their desire, we will most willingly co-operate with them and give them the chance of sharing an obligation that any of them may desire to take. Our own obligations are exceedingly heavy. They are, naturally, if you look at it from the point of view of British interests alone, from the foreign and colonial point of view, heavier than those of any other country. We have no desire to add to them other general obligations, and we should only be too delighted in this matter to share our obligations with any other Powers who are willing to undertake them. And I do welcome, more than I can say, the co-operation of the United States. That, at any rate, we have, and the House cannot value that too highly. After all, the great weapon which has been of value in the Congo controversy so far has been publicity; but it has been left to us alone to give that publicity, and we have been suspected from time to time of interested motives. Now the United States has, through its Consul-General, come to support us in this matter. The United States is above any suspicion, any possible taint of suspicion, of interested motives in this matter, and the fact that the United States Consul-General has issued a Report from which, by the permission of the United States Government, we quote extracts in our own Paper—which is, in itself, evidence of the close co-operation between us—and which I hope the United States Government will publish, corroborating everything which we have said with regard to the government of the Congo, is a fact which must influence the public opinion of Europe. I can only say that we rejoice that we should be found working with the United States in such a cause as this, and I trust that the co-operation which has already begun between our Ministers will be continued and carried further. In dealing with another subject yesterday evening, I had occasion to speak of the impossibility of taking isolated action which would be effective. I do not place any such limitations upon us in regard to the matter of the Congo. But it must be borne in mind that the amount of good which we might be able to do in the matter by isolated action is limited, and that our power for good is vastly increased by co-operation with other Powers. Separate action we are prepared to take on behalf of British treaty rights or British interests. Lord Fitzmaurice, speaking in another place the other day, referred to one difficulty in which we are intimately concerned—the difficulty of obtaining sites which missionaries want for their chapels and other purposes connected with their missions; and he said that the reply of the Congo Government to us on this matter had been unsatisfactory. The reply of the Congo Government has been that, with annexation by Belgium in prospect, it is not prepared to alienate part of their territory. In a matter of this kind of missionary sites, considering all that has taken place, I do not consider that that is a very satisfactory reply. But I have agreed that at the present moment we would wait till the Belgian Session closes, which is, I think, at the end of May, to see what the Belgian Government and the Belgian Parliament are going to do in the matter. If it becomes clear from the present session of the Belgian Parliament that Belgium is going to take the Congo over on satisfactory terms, then, with regard to such a question as this of mission sites, or other questions which we may have to raise, we shall look to her, as we should look to any friendly or civilised Government, and we shall discuss with her questions arising out of our treaty rights in the same way that we should discuss them with any other friendly and civilised Government. But assuming that this does not take place, and that after the close of the present Belgian session we have to deal with the existing Government of the Congo unchanged, then we must be free to deal with questions of this kind or others which may arise out of our treaty rights in our own way. I am not anxious to put trading questions in the foreground. Things are so bad that the trading and commercial aspect is really subordinate to the claims of human interests. We shall, of course, stand upon our treaty rights under the Berlin Act, and our treaty rights which originated in the recognition of the International Association of the Congo in 1884. But when you come to a state of things such as that disclosed in the Papers now before the House, you are dealing really with something which amounts to slavery, which cannot be regarded only from the point of view of treaty rights. It is a violation of the ordinary rules of civilised government. I agree that no isolated action on our part can cure or radically alter the whole system in the Congo State. We may increase our Consuls, we may give them means of transport, we may go so far as to establish consular jurisdiction. But even when we have done all that, we have not secured an alteration of the system under which the Congo is governed. But I would ask the House to believe that if I speak with hesitation as to the action which we may be able to take it is not because I am at all satisfied with those measures which I have already indicated. It is because I am anxious to discover, if I can, any further means of bringing pressure to bear upon the Congo Government But the matter is exceedingly difficult. Treaty rights have been referred to. It is easy to quote one passage out of various treaties by which the Congo State is bound, but you find that the whole network of treaty obligations surrounding the Congo is exceedingly complicated, and where you would like to act on one clause, you find that another clause makes it exceedingly difficult. Take, for instance, the suggestion of my hon. friend the Member for Norfolk, that we should go so far as to intercept the produce coming from the Congo. I gathered that what was in his mind was that we should say that this produce from the Congo is the produce of slave labour, and that, as such, it is a trade which we are entitled to intercept, and which should not be carried on. The Congo is by one of these very treaties a river which is internationally open to free navigation, and you cannot interfere with free navigation on the Congo which is passing under a neutral flag. You are bound by international obligations not to interfere with the Congo. Though I do not say, by any means, that when we have dealt with the Consular question we have exhausted all the measures which may be at our disposal to put pressure on the Congo, still I say it is a matter in which you must move exceedingly carefully, and before I can go so far as to hold out to the House an expectation that we could go beyond the measures which were indicated in the debate in another place the other day, and which have been indicated here this evening, we shall have very carefully to consider what our treaty rights are. But the history of the question, from the foundation of the Congo State—founded to create freedom of trade and to civilise and benefit the natives—does give rise to some suggestions. At first the State undertook not to impose any import duties at all. Later on an agreement was come to under which it was to be entitled to impose import duties to repay it the necessary expenditure upon the moral and material welfare of the natives. The noble Lord opposite suggested on a previous occasion that, if Belgium took over the Congo and found that the financial difficulties were considerable, we might express our readiness to come to her relief by agreeing to a revision of those duties in order to provide her with a larger revenue. I am quite willing to take that into consideration should Belgium take the Congo over on satisfactory terms and should she desire some advantage of that kind for those purposes. It has occurred to me also that we might take the other point of view, and if Belgium does not take over the Congo, we might after all raise the question whether the consent which we gave to these import duties has not been given upon false pretences now that it has become clear that there is no freedom of trade, and that, instead of the country being developed for the benefit of the natives and the revenue raised by import duties or otherwise being spent entirely for the benefit of the community, the country is being exploited by forced labour and the result of the Administration has been to secure large profits sent outside the country. We might consider whether we should not raise the question as to whether our consent to the import duties had not been given under false pretences, and whether our consent is still binding. Coming down to more recent years, we have the Congo Commission Report, followed by the promise of reforms, and we have the state of things which is now disclosed in the reports of the British and United States Consuls. If you review the history of the hopes and aspirations with which consent was given to the foundation of the Congo State, you cannot but come to the conclusion that the State, as it exists to-day, has morally forfeited every right to international recognition. I trust and believe that if Belgium desires to take over the Congo she will do it with full knowledge and on satisfactory terms, but, should she not so decide, the question of the Congo has, in face of the full knowledge which we now have, in face of the hopelessness of expecting reforms from the present administration, entered upon a new stage. There have been results from debates in this House, and from the publicity which has been secured by our action. One of these results I think is the present proposal that the Congo should be transferred at all. But for the publicity we have given and but for our debates, I doubt whether there would have been any question at this moment of transferring the Congo State at all from the existing authority to another. But, whatever the result may be, whether Belgium decides to accept responsibility, or whether we have to take up the question in a short time and continue to deal with the existing state of affairs in the spirit in which I have indicated, we shall deal with it if necessary. I can only assure

Sir Edward Grey.

the House that the Government shares the strength of feeling which exists in this country, that they will do their utmost to find means by which that strength of feeling may receive practical expression, and secure practical results in the reform of the condition of affairs in the Congo. And we are quite willing, believing that every word in the Resolution before the House is thoroughly justified, to accept the Resolution.

EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.): The period of suspense cannot be indefinitely prolonged, and we say so because we are anxious to do nothing to prejudice what is called the Belgian solution. I welcome the explicit statement of the right hon. Gentleman that the Belgian solution means for us an absolute guarantee that annexation when it takes place shall mean that the whole of the administration in the Congo, from top to bottom, shall be subject to full Parliamentary control. I have only to say, expressing the humble belief which I expressed last year, that once that control is secured, other reforms will probably follow as a matter of course. I find that the right hon. Gentleman has subscribed to that view, and that the view is also shared by Lord Cromer. We all recognise the financial embarrassment in which the Belgian Government may be placed by a policy which involves the abolition of the present concessionary system, and that must be abolished if public opinion in this country is to be satisfied. There is the recognition of two principles on which the right hon. Gentleman laid great stress this evening, namely, that the powers of administration should not be left to trading companies, and that the revenue should in some measure be expended on the country itself. I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has made a statement to-night in regard to a suggestion I made as to a revision of the scale of customs duties in the Congo State. The right hon. Gentleman has said that that is a suggestion which the Government will be ready impartially to consider. I quite agree with him that we are inclined to look at the matter from opposite points of view, but I welcome his statement for this reason. I do not think the British Government could give a clearer proof that the motive which chiefly animated us is not connected with our trading interests, but is purely humanitarian. I do not think it is necessary for me to discuss the advisability of isolated action on our part or of our taking the initiative in promoting Concert with the other Powers. I can only hope that, in view of this tangible proof of British goodwill and our desire to assist the Belgian people in extricating themselves from any possible financial embarrassment, public opinion in Belgium will now definitely range itself on the side of public opinion in Great Britain and in America, and will insist that a system of slavery and extortion shall be allowed no longer to shelter itself under the folds of a Christian flag.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) asked whether he rightly understood the right hon Gentleman to say in answer to his hon. friends that there were two distinct limits of time beyond which, he thought, we could not wait. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that before the Belgian Government came to a final conclusion, he would put before them the views which he had put before the House to-night. The other time limit had reference to what he would call British interests, and the alleged violation of the treaty. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that that matter would be brought before the Belgian Government, if by May, when the Session ends, no such scheme of annexation as we can accept has been adopted.

SIR EDWARD GREY replied, but his words were inaudible in the Press Gallery.

SIR CHARLES DILKE said that Questions would be put to the right hon. Gentleman on these matters.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House, being convinced that the present system of administration on the Congo is destructive of the personal liberty and economic rights of the native population and of the freedom of commercial intercourse with the outer world, as guaranteed by the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1884 and the Berlin Act of 1885, asks the Government to do all in its power to secure that a fundamental alteration of the system shall be effected by any transfer of control of the State from the present Sovereign to any other authority; and, failing such transfer within a reasonable time, assures the Government of its hearty support in the measures it may be necessary to take, either alone or in conjunction with the other signatories of the Berlin Act, in order to insure the effective carrying out of its provisions."—(*Mr. Leif Jones.*)

DOG PROTECTION BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir F. BANBURY moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He explained that its object was to prevent experiments on dogs. He held that the dog, being the faithful friend of man, ought to be exempt from having experiments performed upon him. There were many other animals on which experiments could be performed. He would like to see the hon. Member who would get up and oppose this Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. MOONEY (Newry) in moving that the Bill be read upon this day six months said that the hon. Baronet in charge of the measure might have given a more detailed explanation of it. Although he opposed the Bill, he was in favour of the object which it sought to achieve. The whole subject of vivisection ought to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner, instead of a piecemeal fashion. They ought not to exempt dogs from the cruel practice of vivisection and allow other animals to be operated on. The hon. Baronet could have achieved the object he had in view if he had made the Bill more comprehensive. He would probably have been able to carry it through the House without any opposition. He was in full sympathy with everything the hon. Baronet had said about dogs, but he did not see why an exemption should be made of dogs in regard to the cruel practice of vivisection. He considered that the objects for which that practice was carried on could be equally well achieved by other methods. He was against the whole system of vivisection.

Mr. T. L. CORBETT rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put"; but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

And it being Eleven of the Clock. the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday next.

TOBACCO GROWING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

HOPS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the past and present condition of the Hop Industry, and to report thereon.

Committee accordingly nominated of —Mr. Arkwright, Mr. Barker, Sir William Collins, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Gretton, Mr. Mallet, Mr. Napier, Mr. Rowlands, Mr. Edward Strauss, Mr. Verney, and Mr. Patrick White.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That three be the quorum. —(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Mr. J. A. PEASE gave notice of a Motion to suspend the Eleven o'clock Rule to-morrow in order that the interruption of the debate at a quarter-past eight for private business might not prevent the conclusion of the First Reading debate on the Licensing Bill.

Adjourned at seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CLXXXIV.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) House of Lords.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Agricultural Holdings [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 1^a 25th Feb. (1490)
Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord Lovat*	Read 1^a 17th Feb. (383)
Fatal Accidents (Damages) [H.L.]	*Lord Courtney of Penwith*	Bill Withdrawn 18th Feb. (569)
*Fatal Accidents (Damages) No. 2 [H.L.]	*Earl of Granard*	Read 2^a 18th Feb. (567) Committee} Report} 20th Feb. (942) Read 3^a and passed 24th Feb. (1308)
Moveable Dwellings [H.L.]	*Lord Clifford of Chudleigh*	Read 1^a 18th Feb. (605)
Municipal Representation	*Lord Courtney of Penwith*	Read 1^a 17th Feb. (384)
*Patents and Designs [H.L.]	*Earl of Granard*	Read 2^a 18th Feb. (566) Committee} Report} 20th Feb. (942)
*Poisons and Pharmacy [H.L.]	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1^a 17th Feb. (383)
Small Holdings and Allotments [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 1^a 25th Feb. (1490)
Small Holdings and Allotments (Scotland) [H.L.]	*Earl of Camperdown*	Read 1^a 13th Feb. (158) Read 2^a 25th Feb. (1490)
*Small Landholders (Scotland)	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1^a 26th Feb. (1710)

(B.) HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Absent Voters	*Mr. Williamson*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1046)
Agricultural Education in Elementary Schools	*Mr. Jesse Collings*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (833)
Building Lands (Scotland)	*Mr. Munro Ferguson*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (832)
Clerks of the Peace and County Councils	*Mr. Luttrell*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)
Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2)	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1047)
Coal Mines (Eight Hours for Winding Enginemen)	*Mr. W. E. Harvey*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)
Conveyancing	*Mr. Hills*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (224)
Daylight Saving	*Mr. Robert Pearce*	Second Reading adjourned 12th Feb. (155)
Divorce Law Amendment	*Mr. Bottomley*	Bill Withdrawn 24th Feb. (1373)
Divorce Law Amendment (No. 2)	*Mr. Bottomley*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)
Dogs (Injuries to Persons)	*Mr. Dundas White*	Read 1° 26th Feb. (1779)
Dogs' Protection	*Sir Frederick Banbury*	Second Reading adjourned 26th Feb. (1883)
Ecclesiastical Disorders	*Mr. M'Arthur*	Second Reading adjourned 14th Feb. (303)
*Elementary Education (England and Wales)	*Mr. McKenna*	Read 1° 24th Feb. (1373)
Ferries (Ireland)	*Mr. Gwynn*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (225)
Homework Regulation	*Mr. J. R. Macdonald*	Read 1° 17th Feb. (460)
Housing of the Working Classes	*Mr. Bowerman*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)
Housing of Working Classes Acts Amendment	*Sir Walter Foster*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (225)
Industrial Schools	*Mr. Atherley Jones*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (53)
Irish Peerages	*Mr. MacNeill*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (54)
Justices of the Peace	*Mr. Luttrell*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Land Values (Scotland)	*Mr. Thos Shaw*	Read 2° 19th Feb. (837) ; Committee Report Read 3° and passed } 26th Feb. (1781)
Leasehold Enfranchisement	*Mr. Maclean*	Read 1° 26th Feb. (1779)
Lights on Vehicles (Scotland)	*Mr. Watt*	Read 1° 17th Feb. (459)
Local Authorities (Admission of the Press)	*Mr. A. Henderson*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (226)
Luggage (Definition)	*Mr. Thorne*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (225)
Municipal Corporations (Election of Aldermen)	*Mr. Holt*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (53)
Municipal Elections	*Mr. Cleland*	Read 1° 26th Feb. (1778)
Nurses Registration	*Mr. Hay*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (224)
Nurses Registration (No. 2)	*Mr. Munro Ferguson*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (833)
Parliamentary Elections	*Mr. J. Robertson*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (53)
Parliamentary Voters (Registration)	*Sir Randal Cremer*	Read 1° 18th Feb. (655)
Pensions (Old Age)	*Sir Walter Foster*	Read 1° 13th Feb. (224)
Places of Worship (Enfranchisement)	*Mr. David Davies*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1046)
Places of Worship (Sites)	*Mr. David Davies*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1046)
Polling Arrangements (Parliamentary Boroughs)	*Mr. Guinness*	Read 2° 18th Feb. (771)
Polling Districts and Registration of Voters (Ireland)	*Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh*	Read 1° 24th Feb. (1373)
Primogeniture	*Mr. Arnold Herbert*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1047)
Prohibition of Medical Practice by Companies	*Sir John Tuke*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (892)
*Prosecution of Offences (Amendment)	*Mr. Attorney-General*	Read 1° 17th Feb. (460)
Public Health Act (1875) Amendment (Water Rights)	*Mr. Leif Jones*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (832)
Public Libraries	*Mr. Tennant*	Read 1° 26th Feb. (1779).

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*Public Offices Sites (Extension)	*Mr. Harcourt*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1047)
Purity of Milk Supplies (Scotland)	*Mr. Watt*	Read 1° 25th Feb. (1592)
Purchase of Land (England and Wales)	*Mr. Jesse Collings*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (833)
Railway and Canal Traffic	*Mr. Pirie*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (52)
Railways (Eight Hours)	*Mr. Hudson*	Read 1° 17th Feb. (460)
Representation of the People	*Sir Henry Kimber*	Read 1° 17th Feb. (459)
Restraint of Trades (Shops)	*Mr. Seddon*	Read 1° 26th Feb. (1779)
Rights of Way (Scotland)	*Mr. Munro Ferguson*	Read 1° 19th Feb. (833)
Sale of Food and Drugs Acts (Amendment) (Scotland)	*Mr. Mitchell-Thomson*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1046)
Sale of Whisky	*Mr. Williamson*	Read 1° 20th Feb. (1045)
Scottish Land	*Sir Edward Tennant*	Second Reading defeated 21st Feb. (1260)
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Tobacco Growing (Scotland)	*Mr. Morton*	Read 1° 12th Feb. (53) Read 2° 26th Feb. (1884)
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APPENDIX II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1908.

LIST OF RULES, ORDERS, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[In Continuation of List given in previous Volume.]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Town Council of the Borough of Taunton, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Borough [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	13 February	40 days
Factory and Workshop Acts (Special Exception, Substitution of another Day for Saturday),—Copy of Order dated 26th December 1907, made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in pursuance of Section 43 of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as amended by The Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, revoking a previous Order, and granting a Special Exception authorising the occupiers of certain classes of Factories and Workshops to substitute some other day for Saturday as the weekly short day [1 Edw. VII., c. 22, s. 126 (3)]	14 February	40 days
Factory and Workshop Acts (Special Exception, Employment between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.),—Copy of Order dated 26th December 1907, made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in pursuance of Section 36 of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901 as amended by The Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, granting to certain Factories and Workshops a Special Exception as to the period of employment for women and young persons, and revoking the Order of 24th July 1906 [1 Edw. VII., c. 22, s. 126 (3)]	17 February	40 days
Factory and Workshop Acts (Separation of Departments—Period of Employment),—Copy of Order dated 26th December 1907, made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in pursuance of Section 151 of The Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as amended by The Factory and Workshop Act, 1907, allowing, as regards Laundries, that separate Departments of work may be treated as separate Factories or Workshops [1 Edw. VII., c. 22, s. 126 (3)]	17 February	40 days
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Darlington, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the Borough [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	17 February	40 days

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Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
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Prisons (England and Wales),—Copy of Draft Rules proposed to be made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department under The Prisons Act, 1898, and The Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, for the Treatment and Custody of Apellants not admitted to bail [61 and 62 Vic., c. 41, s. 2]	24 February	30 sitting days
Shop Hours Act, 1904,—Copy of Order made by the Council of the County of Anglesey, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain classes of Shops within the parish of Holyhead [4 Edw. VII, c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	25 February	40 days
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[AUTHORISED EDITION].

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Lord Great Chamberlain
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Lord Lieutenant of Ireland
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